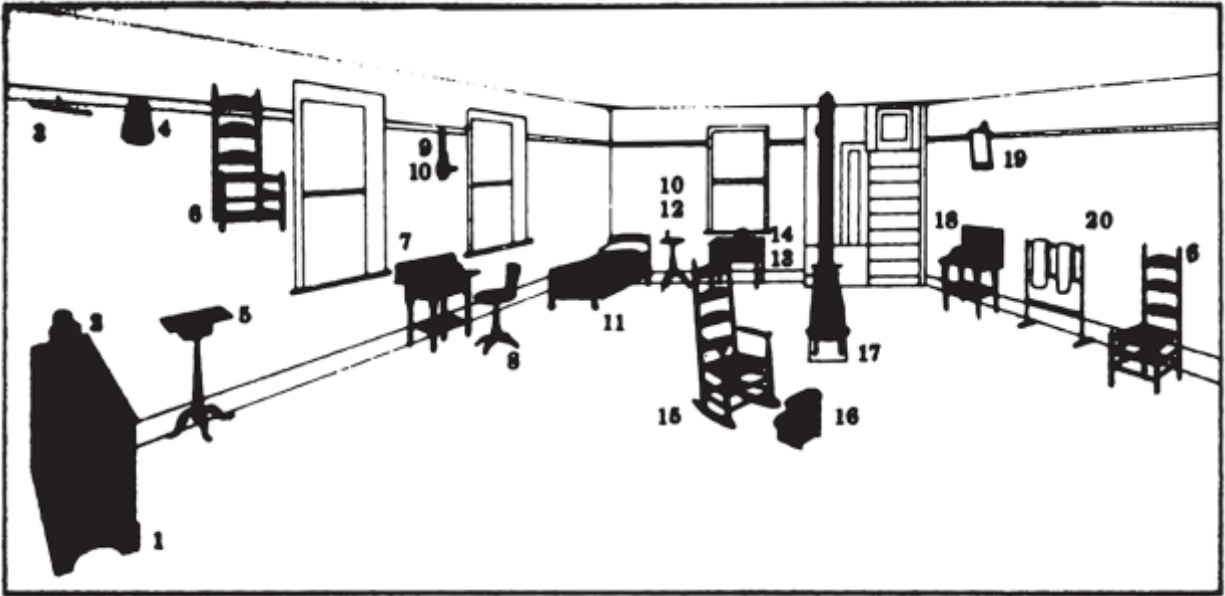


UNFAITHFUL ARCHITECTURE:  
REPRODUCING SHAKER RETIRING ROOMS IN THE AMERICAN WING



A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis takes the “Shaker Retiring Room,” a period room in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s American Wing, as a unique case study to examine the reproduction of architecture. Period rooms, like other visual technologies, do not transparently deliver meaning to a viewer. Unlike other representations, however, the period room is also a work of architecture produced by many laboring hands and the contingencies of the building industry. Through a detailed analysis of the American Wing’s files, I find that this period room cannot be traced back to a single author, meaning, or belief. I argue that this plurality constitutes a fundamental challenge to the notion that architecture reflects the social conditions of its production. What if architecture does not reflect, but transgresses the conditions that produced it? What if architecture were unfaithful to its origins? This thesis poses and demonstrates the relevance of this question for architectural historiography.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Incited by his experience practicing architecture (that is, making drawings for bureaucratic appraisal) in New York City, Athanasiou Geolas investigates the institutionalization of the discipline of architecture in the United States of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the professional architect's necessarily complicit relationships. He focuses on the role of architectural documents (on and off the record) and their imposition of social, political, and moral concepts onto those who make, experience, and employ them. Originally from Kansas City, Athan received his Bachelor of Architecture and emphasis on material processes at Rhode Island School of Design.



With thanks to Betty H. Goolsbee  
&  
In memory of the real and earnest life of Dr. Robert L. Goolsbee

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I would also like to express my thanks to fellow graduate students here at Cornell both within AAP and in the University at large for countless insightful conversations. In particular I want to recognize Liam Lawson, Whitten Overby, and Salvatore Dellaria for seeing what I was after and asking me questions until I could answer them. Working through this research in a number of seminar papers altered my thinking considerably. Thank you to faculty Chad Randl (who put up with my first drafts), Peter Gilgen, D. Medina Lasansky, Neil Saccamano, Jason Frank, Mary N. Woods, Philip Lorenz, and Rachel Prentice. Their criticisms and support were indispensable.

Over the last two years I've had the chance to present versions of this work, and in attempting to make arguments about architecture with this archive learned a great deal. The History of Architecture and Urbanism Society (HAUS) at Cornell University and the HAUS reading group have been a friendly critical atmosphere to stage my thoughts before they were fully formed. Delivering a version of chapter three at the European Architectural History Network's (EAHN) fourth international meeting in Dublin forced those thoughts into formation. I owe this challenge and opportunity to Roy Kozlovsky and Lutz Robbers for organizing the panel titled "The 'Work' of Architecture: Labor Theory and the Production of Architecture." Informal conversations framed by the panel and its other presenters have energized each of the following pages. The participants of the 2016 annual Shaker Seminar that took place between South Union and Pleasant Hill Kentucky reminded me how much more there is to be said about Shaker architecture and offered patient advice on thinking through the contested history of a living religious community. Thank you to Lesley Herzberg for introducing me into this community of researchers.

And finally, thank you to my committee members, to D. Medina Lasansky for demonstrating how much a simple question can upset foundations long forgotten. And, most importantly, thank you to Mary N. Woods for your numerous careful readings and guidance as committee chair.

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## PREFACE

The entirety of this thesis analyzes a single, interior work of architecture – the Shaker period room in the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is my hope that such a focused microhistory will ground a theoretical question about architecture in general. If “architecture” is that which remains after a construction process ceases, then with this thesis I seek to expose the value of the contingent and conflicted details of that process for the writing of architectural history. My goal is to question the premise that because architecture is a product of a certain social world, it *must* embody and exemplify that same world. This premise seems to be a tradition of Modernist architectural historiography. However discredited master narratives may be, and whether these products depict the spirit of the age, the dominant modes of production, the demands or nature of a new material, or a given season’s trends, that architecture behaves as a communicative conduit for viewing or interpreting a given social world continues as a fundamental premise of architectural history today.

I use an analogy to frame this premise and open it up for analysis in the three chapters that follow: social conditions are to architecture as author is to product. Considering “the author” as a set of social conditions that expand beyond the person of a single individual is a tricky thing, but also a necessary one. In any case, to do so may simply be mandatory. Who believes a work of architecture is solely the product of an individual today? Considering architecture to be a product or commodity will most likely meet with less resistance. For architecture (as much material as it is discursive or disciplined) to embody or reflect its social conditions requires that this product carry something of those social conditions either within itself or in its hands, so to speak. This notion (bizarre once singled out) that architecture can be invested with a belief, an intention, structural relations, a National spirit, and so on, comes to a point in the example of the

period room exposing tensions otherwise not on display. Taking this analogy as a starting point, I will ask in the following chapters whether challenging this premise has any purchase on the historiography of architecture.

Appearing somewhat perverse at the start, this architectural history of the Shaker period room begins with a series of counter-intuitive negations. First, I am primarily invested in understanding architectural practice, but this thesis is not *about* architects or their practices. I began with an interest in investigating the contemporary anxiety in architectural discourse surrounding “distributed authorship,” and the challenge it poses to the ideal of the individual-architect-craftsman. Scholarship might look to post-war Corporate Modernism as a model of architectural production free of hero-worship. Massive firms function through an organizational framework that necessarily distributes authority and responsibility as part of their corporate structure. In this context, no longer having a single figure-head to hold responsible indicates that “authorship” has been distributed. The Shakers offer an alternative take. Authorship in Shakerism is a religious concept; it has nothing to do with individual (or even mortal) creativity, responsibility, or liability, although it does have a great deal to do with worship. Rather than distributing it as if it were a quantity that might be more equitably apportioned, authorship in Shaker labor practice speaks to an *ongoing* relationship between producer and product; it designates a ceaseless practice of production. By decentering the architect and in so doing destabilizing a discussion of architectural labor I am opening up another line of thought about the relationship between laborers and the *work* of architecture. If we respond to distributed authorship by proliferating the hero-*architect* into the hero-*collective*, we have not yet re-thought authorship and its relational underpinnings, but only insisted upon those structural components already implicit while at the same time making those underpinnings less visible. The challenge



of distributed authorship is greater than numbers; as will be seen, it concerns the relation between two mutually constitutive positions.

Second, I am explicitly discussing the Shaker's religious and architectural practices, but this is not *about* Shaker architecture. I was first introduced to the Shakers through their architecture, and not their furniture: apparently this is atypical. In fact, I did not even know that they were well-known furniture makers for at least the first year of my interest in their nearly blank facades. I have always been concerned with the link between the Shaker's (sometimes bizarre and effervescent) practices and the almost mute use of material in their buildings. Here, however, I will not be considering Shaker design, aesthetics, or utopian village planning, all of which worked toward explicit and intriguing methods of social control via attempts at behavioral modification. Nor will I be writing about the Shaker's varying popularity since the 1930s, although I do situate them within the rise of Modernist aesthetics in the United States. Furthermore, while the Shakers are a key example for rethinking the historiography of American domesticity, interiority, and gender relations, this fascinating conversation, a starting point for Dolores Hayden, needs to be set aside for the time being. I explicitly exclude all discussion of Shaker celibacy despite it being one of their most well-known peculiarities. Shaker celibacy is of fundamental importance to the politics of reproduction in Shaker architectural practices. That no one has ever been born a Shaker in itself poses a provocative case study to the historiography of American Capitalism insofar as Shaker communities (internally) modify the sexual division of labor underpinning their significant labor-power. I hope that future research will take this fact seriously. I also suggest other avenues within the body of the thesis between Women's Studies, Shaker history, and architectural production. Here, the Shakers are a group of believers whose

architecture has been rebuilt with a different politics of reproduction by an entirely different group (the American Wing), with different beliefs, at a different place, and in a different time.

Third, I am analyzing in detail the construction practices of a period room in the American Wing, but this is not *about* the exhibitions or architecture of the American Wing. It is certainly true and worth noting that the American Wing as a topic is bound up with the politics of taste, connoisseurship, and collecting, with historically explicit invocations of nationalism, racism, and exclusionary canon-formations, as well as inclusive, cosmopolitan, and pluralistic aspirations. Such ideological narratives are unavoidable realities within and surrounding museum institutions, and yet, a significant part of my intention is to demonstrate that solely or even primarily discussing such narratives is looking *through* rather than *at* the institution. Ultimately then, this thesis is not a history of Shaker or museum architecture, or the host of topics that might most obviously come from this juxtaposition. This does not mean these other topics are not worth pursuing, and it is important to acknowledge this variety of possibilities not only to point out the wealth of research yet to be done, but also to insist on the focus of this research.

This research project certainly did not begin with these three somersaults, but each negation works in concert with the others to produce a landscape, a field of forces from which my central question emerged, and in which it can most clearly be considered. The foundation of my question appears most clearly in the peculiar circumstances of period room production. Period rooms are ambiguous objects; they employ personal experience to educate visitors about a variety of topics. Their very capacity to provide a personal, empirical experience as a didactic moment exposes them as an object of study that is both representational (this experience means something and delivers knowledge) and literal (this experience is facilitated by a physical room built specifically and solely for this purpose). That is to say, period rooms are both architectural

representations depicting other works of architecture, and architectural constructions resulting from the organization and labor of a specialized sector of the building industry.

The Shaker period room, in particular, builds upon this fact of period rooms and exposes a paradoxical situation that other rooms cannot. Labor is central to Shaker architecture, and so the Shaker period room at the American Wing necessarily represents to visitors in this didactic moment a unique mode of production. While the American Wing asserts a connection between Shaker labor and Shaker architecture, and while they present the visitor with an empirical experience of that meaningful connection, they also implicitly posit that the labor of the American Wing necessary for the construction of this room is transparent and has no bearing on the meaning of the room. In other words, the Shaker period room offers an explicit example of a work of architecture that specifically does *not* reflect the social conditions of its production. The Shaker period room exposes the gap between the mode of production which led to the original work of architecture, and the mode of production that led to the construction of the period room; a fact ironically exposed not by a discontinuity or conflict, but by a purported correspondence – the supposedly identical meaning of both the Shaker Retiring Room built by the Shakers of Mount Lebanon, NY, and the “Shaker Retiring Room” built by the museum to represent it.

This is certainly true of all other period rooms at the Metropolitan. However, exposing this gap as well as the labor of the museum obscured in the production process does not adequately demonstrate the full significance of this realization for architectural history. For instance, the American Wing’s 2015 exhibition “Artistic Furniture of the Gilded Age” included the construction of the “Worsham-Rockefeller Dressing Room.” The construction of this room has been thoroughly documented, and the American Wing has publicly acknowledged who did what when and why in the construction of this period room. They have explained in gloriously

fine-grained detail the contingencies of the building industry and the labor and expertise this production process required covering everything from the order of operations (they had to install the ceiling first and work their way down to the floorboards), material deterioration and best practices of restoration (preservation work with an eye for future disassembly), all the way to fire sprinkler placement and attachment detailing behind the surface of the wall.<sup>1</sup> And yet, even this nearly complete description of construction labor all seems too obvious. I believe that it is because of this self-evidence that the public accounting of the work involved in producing the “Worsham-Rockefeller Dressing Room” fails to show what is at stake in such an interrogation. Namely that what these period rooms demonstrate is not only one more example of commodity fetishism (though this is certainly the case), but also and far more importantly, that the American Wing substitutes one mode of production for another (whether those modes are similar or not) while insisting that the full meaning of the room has remained unaltered: meaning travels, but labor is expended. This matters not just because architectural history ought to acknowledge labor, but because it demonstrates that if there is a connection between a mode of production, a producer, and the meaning of a product, then we are the ones who must insist on it.

To explain what I mean by this, I would like to offer a heuristic device through which to understand the statement I just made, as well as each of the following chapters. In 1931 Universal Pictures adapted Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* for the screen. I use a single frame from this film to visualize the relationship between author and product (Figure 0.1). There, Victor

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<sup>1</sup> Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen (Anthony W. and Lulu C. Wang Curator of American Decorative Arts), Nicholas Vincent (Manager of Collection Planning), and Marijn Manuels (Conservator, Department of Objects Conservation), “Sunday at The Met—Traces of the Gilded Age,” Presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Artistic Furniture of the Gilded Age: George A. Schastey*, on view December 15, 2015–May 1, 2016. Recorded January 31, 2016. <http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2015/artistic-furniture-of-the-gilded-age> (Accessed: 16:19, 19 November 2016).

**Figure 0.1.** Victor Frankenstein and the Monster look at each other on Mont Blanc, Karloff, Boris, James Whale, and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Universal Pictures, 21 November 1931.



Frankenstein and the Monster confront one another on Mont Blanc; they stand face to face and look *at* each other, eyes-locked, contemplating their mutual horror.

The title of this thesis – *Unfaithful Architecture* – points directly at this moment. Is Dr. Frankenstein responsible for every action this Monster will take? Will the Monster remain subservient to the circumstances of its birth and the wishes of Dr. Frankenstein? How much of what Dr. Frankenstein has invested into these pieces and parts that make up the Monster standing before him, how much appeared after he had completed his task, and what will happen if the Monster looks (and then walks) away? How do we evaluate and interpret this creature without discarding the significance of this relationship? I take this Frankenstein-Monster tableau as the site of this thesis. It is a landscape that exists between the author and the product within the space of production (a space which incidentally is not limited to the laboratory). When the practice of the Shaker period room’s construction is done, so am I – although, as will be seen, it may be surprising how long this kind of space persists after the product has been anointed *complete* or *finished*. In other words, the extent of this analysis exists retrospectively in the ongoing relationship between authors and products, in the practices of production and reproduction.

The Shaker room offers a unique and emblematic opportunity to address precisely the challenge of this scene. The specific subject of this thesis can perhaps best be understood as an historical thought experiment played out within a given place and time, amongst a particular set of expectations, concepts, agendas, and materials. The critical project in this case requires that one argue for a new kind of fidelity or perhaps loyalty to the relationship between author and product; indeed, the term “unfaithful” cannot exclude “faith” completely. If we lose faith in and no longer insist on the connection to the author, then we fetishize the product and lose sight of the significant labor that went into making it. If we idolize the connection between author and

product, and move into hero-worship once more (however plural, collective, and distributed that hero is), then we lose sight of any effect of the product in a world not foreordained. When considering a work of architecture neither may be excluded in the effort to address the place of architectural practice in our world.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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Blasphemy has always seemed to require taking things very seriously. I know no better stance to adopt from within the secular-religious, evangelical traditions of United States politics, including the politics of socialist feminism. Blasphemy protects one from the moral majority within, while still insisting on the need for community. Blasphemy is not apostasy.

Donna J. Haraway (1983)

### 1.1. *A Helpful Abomination*

A scene from a 1924 opening ceremony sets the stage for this thesis: Standing before a crowd of New York City's elite he helped select to witness an historic occasion, then president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA) and chairman of these proceedings, Robert W. de Forest introduced the architect of a brand new American Wing.<sup>1</sup> Grosvenor Atterbury, president de Forest tells us, combines "a number of important qualifications for this particular enterprise," not the least of which (it would seem) was consenting "to do nothing original" at the behest of his client.<sup>2</sup> Once on stage, Atterbury makes a startling confession about his task, and in so doing

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Epigraph: Haraway, Donna J., "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.149.

<sup>1</sup> Robert W. de Forest, Edward Robinson, R. T. H. Halsey, Grosvenor Atterbury, Henry W. Kent, and Elihu Root, *Addresses on the Occasion of the Opening of the American Wing* (New York & Boston: The Metropolitan Museum of Art & The Merrymount Press, 1925). Marshall B. Davidson, "Those American Things," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 3 (1970): 219–33. Little has been written about these opening speeches despite their extremely rich content and ideological clarity. These *Addresses* can also be found published in Bettina Messias Carbonell (ed.), *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012). See also the special issue of *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Vol.17, no.11 (November 1922), which holds contributions from R.T.H. Halsey, George Francis Dow, Charles O. Cornelius among others. Each articles discusses the design and intent of an American Wing scheduled to open in 1924.

<sup>2</sup> De Forest, *Opening Addresses*, p.16. Grosvenor Atterbury (1869-1956) is predominantly described as an architect of the moneyed elite building highly engineered mansions in traditional styles during the first decades of the twentieth century, as well as for developing a prefabrication system to house the poor. He is a lasting reminder of the well-intentioned, privileged, and conservative foundations of Progressive politics in the History of Architecture. See Grosvenor Atterbury. Papers, #3762. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library,



reveals the contradictions inherent between a work of architecture and the people, things, and beliefs which make them up. He states:

The problem, as I see it, is to restore to all of the old works of art—architectural and decorative—collected by the Museum during many years, such a background and an atmosphere that, recognizing their old homes and each other, they will settle down contentedly in one building, under one roof, in friendly relations, and be tempted, themselves, to tell their own stories.

You may ask why under such circumstances the architectural profession was called upon at all. And I think I can best answer that question by quoting the definition of the Sunday School scholar when the teacher asked him about a lie. "A lie," he said, "is an Abomination in the sight of the Lord, but a Very Present Help in case of Trouble." And we had a pretty clear case of it in the American Wing.<sup>3</sup>

To conclude his speech a few moments later, Atterbury describes how one might best evaluate the success of this troublesome work.

If, in passing by some night, returning, perhaps, at crack of dawn from one of our marble-lined, electrified, steam-heated, "jazz-racked" hotel ballrooms, I chance to see, through the windows of the old Gadsby's Tavern room, the flickering light of tallow candles and hear the faint sound of a spinet marking the stately measure of a minuet, or the none too certain strains of "Sally in our Alley," then, whatever you and the critics may say, I shall know that we have really made a success of the American Wing.<sup>4</sup>

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Ithaca, New York; Leland M. Roth, "Atterbury, Grosvenor - Oxford Reference," (ed) Joan Marter, *The Grove Encyclopedia of American Art*. (Oxford University Press, 2011), <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195335798.001.0001/acref-9780195335798-e-102> (Accessed 27 August 2016); Peter Pennoyer, *The Architecture of Grosvenor Atterbury*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., c2009). To hear Atterbury's own voice concerning aesthetics over originality see Grosvenor Atterbury, "Hospitals and Esthetics: The Architectural Problem, with Particular Reference to Esthetics and the Art of Architecture," *The American Magazine of Art* 7, no. 11 (1916): 443–47.

<sup>3</sup> Atterbury, *Opening Addresses*, 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> Atterbury, *Opening Addresses*, 21. Quotes like these also mark the odd Progressivism of an American Wing that is part of America's Colonial Revival. See Jeffrey Trask, *Things American: Art Museums and Civic Culture in the Progressive Era* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Wendy Kaplan, "R. T. H. Halsey: An Ideology of Collecting American Decorative Arts," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 43–53.

Atterbury gives us the problem, his method, and the means of evaluation to understand the sixteen new period rooms now gathered together “to tell their own stories.”<sup>5</sup> The apocryphal anecdote he tells at the heart of his speech would have been well known to the audience that day.<sup>6</sup> It recounts a young scholar called upon at Sunday School who, in an anxious response, collages two bits of biblical scripture with unrelated meanings, and in their juxtaposition contradicts the expected moral message.<sup>7</sup> Viewed through Atterbury’s allegory, the American Wing is an assemblage of “old works of art” that have been skillfully and un-truthfully “restored” to their familiar “background and atmosphere.” Having done so, these disparate historical artefacts must “settle down contentedly... under one roof” and there, like the Sunday School scholar’s recounting of scripture, maintain “friendly relations” even when they stand in contradiction with one another (Figure 1.1).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The determinism that marks the desired correlation between socio-political aspirations and the articulation of a particular environment has haunted the discipline of architecture throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and at least since the publication of Augustus Pugin’s book *Contrasts* in 1836. This observation extends beyond the parameters of this thesis, but it is worth noting that the American Wing appears (somewhat unexpectedly) to be an explicit instance of this desire. If the *Opening Addresses* are not yet explicit enough to prove this agenda, find the discussion of these sixteen rooms including the curator’s specific intentions for each in R. T. H. Halsey and Charles O. Cornelius, *A Handbook of the American Wing Opening Exhibition*. 2nd ed. with corrections (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1925).

<sup>6</sup> At the time Atterbury spoke this anecdote, it would perhaps have been most famously attributed to Mark Twain, who himself deployed the moral paradox of this collage in a 1901 speech. However, losing the ironic tone of Twain, the story is fully collapsed and more recently ascribed to Adlai Stevenson. For instance, *Forbes Magazine* plainly puts the words (stripped of biblical reference) in Stevenson’s mouth on their website, “Forbes Quotes: Thoughts On The Business Of Life,” <http://www.forbes.com/quotes/111/> (Accessed 20 May 2016). It is further attributed to Stevenson as a quote of serious theological consideration regarding the Christian morality of varying types of lies in McLaughlin, Ra, “A Lie Is An Abomination Unto The Lord, But A Present Help In Trouble,” *IIIM Magazine Online*, Vol.5, No.30 (Aug.25-31, 2003), [http://reformedperspectives.org/newfiles/ra\\_mclaughlin/NT.Mclaughlin.Lies.8.25.03.html](http://reformedperspectives.org/newfiles/ra_mclaughlin/NT.Mclaughlin.Lies.8.25.03.html) (Accessed 16:36, May 25, 2016). The arc formed by these various permutations each deploying a quote of unknown origin closely parallels what I call “unfaithful” architecture.

<sup>7</sup> Proverbs 12:22: “Lying lips *are* abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly *are* his delight..” Psalm 46:1: “God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” *King James Bible*.

<sup>8</sup> For a more explicit link between American democracy, liberalism and museum display practices, look to the collaboration between John Dewey and Albert C. Barnes in the development of the educational displays in the Barnes Foundation. For a strong overview of this relationship and its implications see Margaret Hess Johnson,

When describing the difficulty of fitting these disjointed pieces together – “the most diabolical cross-word puzzle ever concocted is mere child's play in comparison” – Atterbury states plainly the American Wing’s intention that the new wing qua cross-word puzzle “must be so arranged that you can read it... "every-which-way," and yet always spell the same words, "The Spirit of Colonial Art".”<sup>9</sup> I call Atterbury’s statement a confession above because it seems he has willingly revealed too much about the labor involved in using “original” items to construct an un-original work of architecture. Can the period rooms of the American Wing be both a lie, and true enough to call the ghosts of colonial America back from the grave? Would it be more accurate to call this fictional or even coercive architecture?

As new assemblages of old parts, the rooms in the American Wing resemble something we might refer to as Victor Frankenstein’s collection of Colonial Revival monsters. However, while the period rooms might bring certain American spirits back to life in the body of their domestic interiors, there is no guarantee that they will speak the same words they once did. Donna Haraway’s essay on the dioramas of the American Museum of Natural History helps to interpret this comparison. She thinks through Mary Shelley’s famous book by focusing closely on the relationship between the Monster and its Father. Fraught as it may be, the Monster laments the loss of its father, while Victor fears (for) his progeny. It is in this way that Atterbury’s *helpful abominations*, that his “illegitimate offspring” to use Haraway’s phrase,

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“John Dewey’s Socially Instrumental Practice at the Barnes Foundation and the Role of ‘Transferred Values’ in Aesthetic Experience,” *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 46, no. 2 (2012): 43–57.

<sup>9</sup> Atterbury, *Opening Addresses*, p.18. Success will come, in other words, when the ghosts of colonial times sense a building with a certain “lived-in-quality,” a collection of rooms which remain in “their aspect so natural, their atmosphere so unchanged, their quality so untainted by any of our strange modern innovations,” they will move back in and feel at home (Atterbury, *Opening Addresses*, 19). See in particular Atterbury’s concluding fantasy on page 21.

strike a chord with the Frankenstein's Monster insofar as they are both "exceedingly unfaithful to their origins."<sup>10</sup>

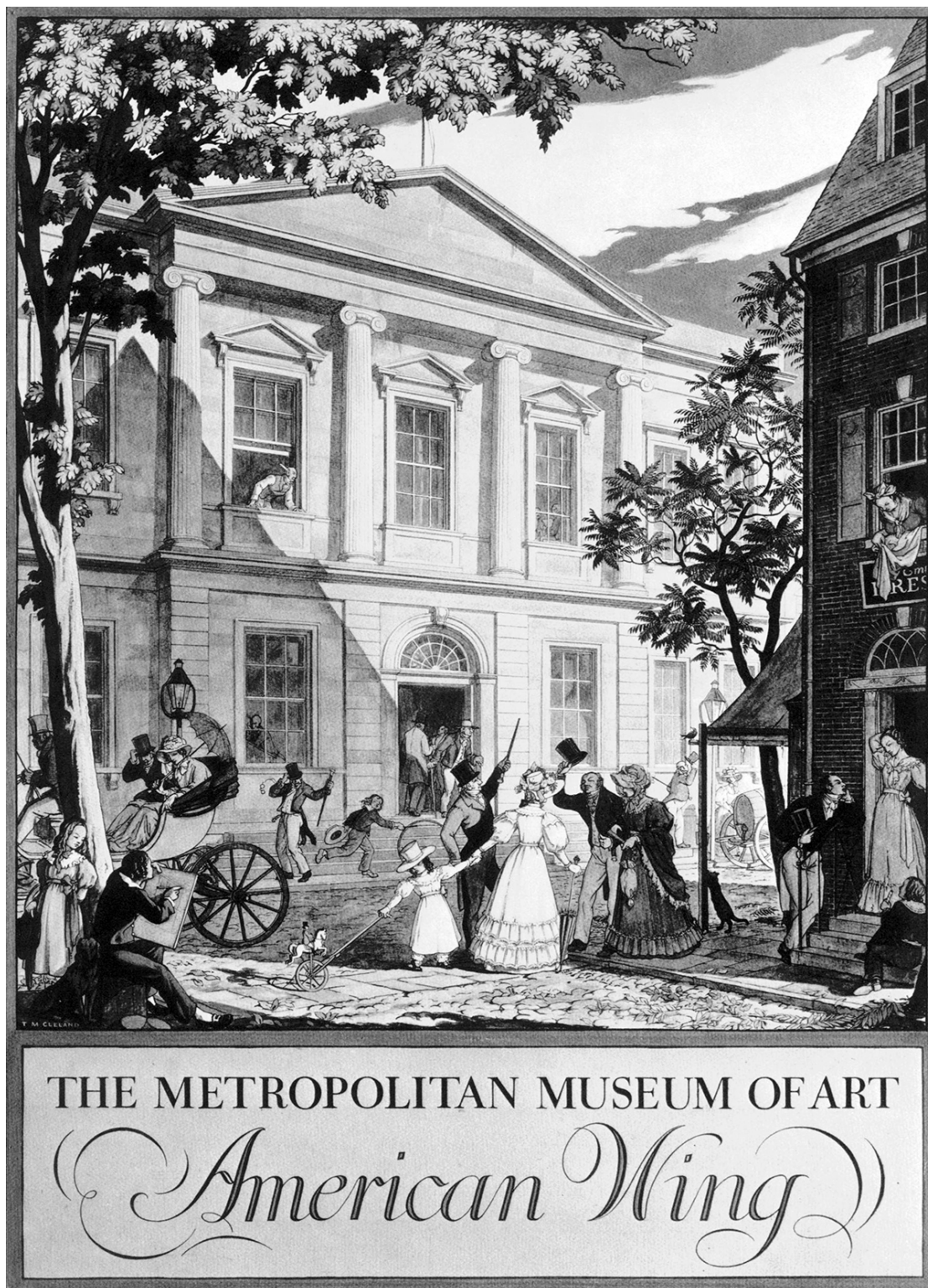
This thesis plays out in the deep ambivalence between spiritual expressions and the material actions that seek to manifest them. Between the American Wing's aspirations to present the Colonial American spirit, on the one hand, and the material actions that make these manifestations possible, on the other, there emerges a multivalent paradox: the period room is original but built without originality; it is physically present but only means the past; it is painstakingly accurate but a fiction made up of disparate parts, each playing a different role and all potentially in disagreement. Perhaps it is the specific capacity of the visualizing technology of the new period room that allows the architecture of the American Wing to cohere and sustain such contradictions. Can an assemblage of building parts and cultural artefacts express the beliefs of former inhabitants? Are materials embedded with the lives that once lived around them? The architectural problem may be how to bring coherence to "a whole lot of old rooms with all their old corners and all their irregularities," but for the architectural historian confronted with the aspect of these livable interiors the problem is a different one.<sup>11</sup> Here, it has more to do

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<sup>10</sup> I have suppressed Haraway's later discussion of the cyborg here. Her understanding of the cyborg, itself another assemblage of parts, irremediably alters this relationship. In Haraway's reading, the cyborg has no father (that is to say, no "author") over which to lament, no origin to which to return, and hence no nostalgia (and no desire) for the past or for tradition. Haraway's critique is aimed (in large part) directly at the political-theoretical notion of "natural man," that Enlightenment monster assembled during eighteenth-century discourse placing individual autonomy at the foundation of all later decisions as if it were inevitable. However, I see the confrontation between Frankenstein and the Monster (Figure 0.1) as the moment immediately following the departure from the laboratory (space of production), and immediately preceding the appearance of the cyborg (a pure space of reception in which the product has no memory of and no unique relation with the author. It is in this interstitial moment of possibility that I see the most fraught and most useful relationship. See Donna J. Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936," *Social Text*, no. 11 (December 1, 1984): 20-64; *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989); "A Cyborg Manifesto," *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1991), pp. 151-182.

<sup>11</sup> De Forest, *Opening Addresses*, p.16.

**Figure 1.1.** Thomas Cleland, American Wing Poster, 1924, commissioned by H.W. Kent for opening of American Wing, note the fictional appearance of the new Wing's repurposed façade (today visible in the Charles Engelhard Court) on a busy public street, and the emphasis on genteel social interactions (*Metropolitan Museum Journal* 3 [1970]).



with how to interpret inert and seemingly self-evident rooms with sensitivity to the narratives they convey, while also never ignoring the work, the materials, the knowledge, and the beliefs that went into their construction.

## ***1.2. The “Shaker Retiring Room”***

This thesis takes one of the period rooms in the American Wing as a unique case study through which to examine the roles of documents, labor, and belief in the production and reproduction of architecture. At stake in this analysis is the notion this particular period room reflects the authors and conditions which made it. In the pages to come, I will argue that the impact of laborers on the analysis of the architecture they produce undermines pervasive notions of authorship and its contemporary critique in architectural discourse. Opened to the public in November of 1981, the American Wing began acquiring the artefacts to stand within their “Shaker Retiring Room” in 1966 (Figure 1.2). A “retiring room,” the American Wing tells us, served as both a bedroom and, as prescribed by the *Millennial Laws*, a place in which to retire “in silence, for the space of half an hour, and labor for a sense of the gospel, before attending meeting.”<sup>12</sup> The *Millennial Laws* were a kind of codex for Shaker life instituted in 1821. These rules dictated everything from daily schedules and routines in a Shaker village, to acceptable clothing, language, social structure, and, as with the retiring room, the distribution of programs within a Shaker building.<sup>13</sup> A “retiring room,” however, was not a “bedroom” as is typically

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<sup>12</sup> For the full description see MMA, “Architectural elements from North Family Dwelling, New Lebanon, New York,” Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1972.187.1/> (Accessed 16 August 2016).

<sup>13</sup> *Millennial Laws or Gospel Statues and Ordinances adapted to the Day of Christ’s Second Appearing. Given and established in the Church for the protection thereof by Father Joseph Meacham and Mother Lucy Wright the presiding Ministry and by their Successors the Ministry and Elders. Recorded at New Lebanon Aug’t 7<sup>th</sup> 1821. Revised and re-established by the Ministry and Elders Oct 1845.* (Mount Lebanon, New York: United Society of

conceived today; and so to think of the Shaker period room as analogous to one's own bedroom is incorrect.<sup>14</sup> While Shaker brothers and sisters did indeed sleep in these rooms, their function, as the *Laws* tell us, had more to do with a space for silent, personal prayer, a place in which to “labor for a sense of the gospel,” and thus to prepare oneself for the collective worship that would follow shortly thereafter in the meeting room one floor below.

As this case study unfolds, I (and my interlocutors) refer to this period room in a variety of ways. Although it may seem clear-cut, the boundaries of this room are anything but settled. This confusion derives in large part because any work of architecture is inherently multiple insofar as its physical manifestation is only one part of what makes it up.<sup>15</sup> For instance, there is a difference between the “Shaker Retiring Room” (appearing in quotation marks), and the Shaker period room. While the one is an object formed, produced, and discussed by the American Wing to represent an historical work of architecture, the other refers to that which fills Gallery No.118, a physical space on the second floor of the building. The “Shaker Retiring Room” might be termed a semiotic or discursive object insofar as its name refers primarily to the Shaker room as a coherent idea to the exclusion of more mundane aspects deemed irrelevant to Shaker

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Shakers, 1845). Reprinted as Appendix in Andrews, *The People Called Shakers* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963), pp. 249-289.

<sup>14</sup> Despite this, one ought to keep interpretations in mind like those of contemporary American sculptor Tom Sachs. According to Sachs, the Shaker room ought to be taken as a didactic reference point against which to compare our own bedrooms and reconsider all of the stuff that fills them. See *Tom Sachs on the Shaker Retiring Room | The Artist Project Season 1 | The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, <http://artistproject.metmuseum.org/1/tom-sachs/> (Accessed August 29, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Such multiplicity is typically discussed outside of architectural history as *object formation*. I take my understanding of this concept from Rachel Prentice, whose ethnographic work on the education of surgeons during their residency periods carefully plays out the various ways in which bodies are formed for collective understanding, intervention, and even for positions on a hospital's surgical staff. See Rachel Prentice, *Bodies in Formation: An Ethnography of Anatomy and Surgery Education*, Experimental Futures (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013). See also Donna Haraway on the “risky practice” of maintaining object's boundaries, “Situated Knowledges,” in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, 200-201. Most canonically, one can look to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, (trans.) Colin Smith, (London: Routledge, 2006). See, for instance, Part II, chapter 3: “The Thing and the Natural World.”



**Figure 1.2.** “Architectural elements from North Family Dwelling, New Lebanon, New York,” American Wing, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, c.1996-2016, color photograph (<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1972.187.1/> [Accessed October 2015]).





architecture, style, or aesthetic – such as the skim coat of cement which levels the gallery’s structural floor beneath the visible and highly valuable Shaker floor boards installed above. Whereas, the Shaker period room is a material object constituted by the very wood, metal fasteners, paint, and other historical and contemporary materials which compose it. While referring to the American Wing’s Shaker room might indicate either of these two objects; but, there is no guarantee that my interlocutors do not have an entirely different object in mind or in hand. The point is to acknowledge that what counts as the Shaker room is not given, but decided upon in practice at each moment; its boundaries fluctuate.

In the case study that follows I will attempt to recognize and acknowledge multiple components that come together to form this Shaker period room as a work of architecture that is inherently plural; I attempt to make the Shaker room available for scrutiny within architectural history. Its parts include the historical interior dismantled and brought to the American Wing along with the furniture it frames, the intentions of numerous authors, and the documentation and historiography of Shaker material culture and architecture over the past hundred years. There are innumerable objects that might be constituted by all or some of these aspects. Making this diverse and contradictory collection of materials, narratives, and experiences into a single and coherent object is an ongoing process. Fortunately, the format of the period room as a particular kind of architecture makes this much easier. It is for this reason that I refer to the period room not as a product, and not quite as a tool or instrument, but as period room technology.

### ***1.3. Period Room Technology***

Most basically, technology can be understood as the means by which a thing can be made to do stuff. I call period rooms a “technology” to indicate that these interior rooms are far more

than simple volumes filled with artistic furniture and lined with artistic woodwork. These rooms not only *work on* their visitors, but also they also *work with* those who employ them. A period room may look like the interior spaces it imitates, but its underlying technology is different. In fact, this technological difference can be identified most plainly in the very fact that where an interior room allows for people to live their everyday lives, the period room only *looks like* those interior rooms. Period rooms functions by depicting all kinds of spaces from the historical, to the stylistic, instructive, or moral to name just a few. Period room technology, then, can be defined as that mechanism by which a material space encodes and embodies other spaces, ideas, and meanings.

There has been some debate regarding where and when the concept of the period room first materialized in its mature form.<sup>16</sup> Many antecedents to this particular method of display appear in Museum Studies and American Material Culture literature. These early precursors offer great interest insofar as they help extract the period room from the context in which it predominantly discussed, and realign it with Architectural History. Even within museological discourse there seems to be continuous confusion (albeit around seemingly subtle variations) about what precisely defines a “period room.” The lack of certainty in the definition of the phrase “period room” is not a product of critical debate so much as what I would suggest is the most powerful capacity of period rooms as a means of visualizing history: they do not require an articulate definition because they appear matter-of-fact. Period room technology presents

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<sup>16</sup> For an account of this debate see Melinda Young Frye, “The Beginning of the Period Room in American Museums: Charles P. Wilcomb’s Colonial Kitchens, 1896, 1906, 1910,” in *The Colonial Revival in America*, (ed) Alan Axelrod, (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Co., published for The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1985), 217-240. For a general history of the museum in America see Walter Muir Whitehill, Clifford K. Shipton, Louis Leonard Tucker, and Wilcomb E. Washburn. “History of Museums in the United States: Report of a Session of the American Historical Association 28 December, 1964.” *Curator: The Museum Journal* 8, no. 1 (January 1, 1965): 5–54.

visualizations of historical interiors as knowledge, that is as self-evident, present, and easily accessible accounts of the past for an average viewing public. All one need do is witness these spaces and our natural inclinations will lead to a first-hand *experience* of history: knowledge by osmosis. American Historian and former Director of Interpretation at Colonial Williamsburg, Edward P. Alexander (1907-2003) considered these rooms capable of solving the problem of connecting and unifying disparate smaller facts “into meaningful wholes,” of producing complete objects that brought historical knowledge together into “a psychological unity that appeals directly to the emotions of its viewers.”<sup>17</sup> A discussion of the various display techniques that helped develop this period room technology establishes one layer of the conceptual landscape to which the analysis of the “Shaker Retiring Room” will contribute.

Articulating these many antecedents produces part of a genealogy for the rooms that appear in the American Wing. E.P. Alexander suggests the period room has three precedents: Madame Marie Tussaud’s wax museum, nineteenth-century panoramas and dioramas with painted backdrops and carefully arranged sculpture in the foreground, and the so-called Habitat Groups of natural history museums.<sup>18</sup> To this list he later adds four more: the historic preservation movement, the outdoor museum, museums devoted to the industrial and decorative arts, and “America’s most original and important contribution,” the historic house museum.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Edward P. Alexander, “A Fourth Dimension for History Museums,” *Curator: The Museum Journal*, Vol.11, Iss.4 (December 1968): 281.

<sup>18</sup> Edward P. Alexander, “Artistic and Historical Period Rooms,” *Curator: The Museum Journal*, Vol.7, Iss.4 (October 1964): 263-281, 269. For more on nineteenth-century technologies of representation see Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990). For more on Natural History displays as a precedent see Albert E. Parr, “Mood and Message,” *Curator: The Museum Journal*, Vol.6, Iss.3 (July 1963): 204-216; John A. Sweeney, “The Evolution of Winterthur Rooms,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol.1 (1964): 13. Sweeney is discussed within David L. Barquist, “Period Room Architecture in American Museums,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol.46, No.2/3 (Summer/Autumn 2012): 113-116 as part of a special issue of *Winterthur Portfolio* publishing essays from a 2005 Symposium they held on the period room.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander, “A Fourth Dimension for History Museums,” 263-289. For more on historic preservation see Charles Bridgham Hosmer, *Presence of the Past; a History of the Preservation Movement in the United States before*

One might also turn to the many international exhibitions taking place throughout the nineteenth century. In 1876 a “New England Kitchen” exhibit appeared within the Philadelphia Centennial celebration, and there were at least six versions of similar New England or “Olde Tyme” kitchens that had already traveled across the United States, the first of which appeared as early as 1864.<sup>20</sup> In 1878 Swedish educator and founder of the Nordiska Museet in Stockholm, Artur Hazelius, brought a collection of his Nationalist period displays to the Paris World’s Fair in order to display Swedish folk environments un-ravaged by the homogenizing tendencies of industrialization. Further American model kitchens were repeated at the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago as “The New England Log Cabin and Ye Olden Time Restaurant.”<sup>21</sup> Charles Presby Wilcomb constructed perhaps the first permanent “Colonial Kitchen” exhibition in 1896 within the Gold Gate Park Museum of San Francisco, CA; and, in 1907, George Francis Dow constructed a series of permanent alcoves at the Essex Institute in Salem, MA including a bedroom, parlor, and of course, a colonial kitchen. Dow’s alcoves typically mark the first appearance of the “period room,” as such, in the United States.<sup>22</sup>

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*Williamsburg* (New York: Putnam, 1965). For more on museums of industrial and decorative arts see Wendy Joan Kaplan, “R. T. H. Halsey: An Ideology of Collecting American Decorative Arts,” M.A. Thesis, University of Delaware, Winterthur Program, (1980). For a careful account of historic house museums see Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America’s House Museums* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999).

<sup>20</sup> See Rodris Roth, “The New England, or “Olde Tyme,” Kitchen at Nineteenth-Century Fairs” in (ed) Axelrod, Alan, *The Colonial Revival in America*, (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Co., published for The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1985), pp.159-183. Also in the 1876 exposition appeared Shaker “farming, agricultural equipment and furniture” bringing greater public awareness to the community well before their twentieth-century documentation. See Stephen Bowe and Peter Richmond, *Selling Shaker: The Commodification of Shaker Design in the Twentieth Century*. Value, Art, Politics 1 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), p52n1.

<sup>21</sup> See Roth, “The New England, or “Olde Tyme,” Kitchen at Nineteenth-Century Fairs”; Frye, “The Beginning of the Period Room in American Museums”; Susan Prendergast Schoelwer, “Curious Relics and Quaint Scenes: The Colonial Revival at Chicago’s Great Fair,” in (ed) Axelrod, Alan, *The Colonial Revival in America*, (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Co., published for The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1985), pp.184-216.

<sup>22</sup> Frye, “The Beginning of the Period Room in American Museums,” 233.

Shortly after, the MMA put on their 1909 Hudson-Fulton exhibition, a venture which included for the first time in a major American museum the introduction of American domestic arts within period settings. But, it was a visit to Dow's alcoves that eventually convinced the museum's board and trustees to support the construction of the American Wing in 1924.<sup>23</sup> The American Wing brings us full circle for this brief survey, as they carry one aspect of the 1876 exhibition forward strongly. These period rooms were no mere representations as the Wing's first curator R.T.H. Halsey insists:

*It was in rooms like these* that the campaigns against the Indians were planned and the discussions were held which led to the formation of the Cambridge Platform in 1648, which completed the theocratic organization of the Puritan Commonwealth of Massachusetts. *It was before firesides like these* that the perils of witchcraft were discussed and the stories were told of the hairbreadth escapes of Goffe and Whalley, the judges of King Charles the First, who found refuge here from the King's officers. Indeed, the ghosts of all early New England romance might well appear from behind these walls.

Through the re-materialization of these rooms, from Halsey's perspective, citizen-visitors now had the opportunity to see a space in which "the first practical assertion of the rights of the people, not only to choose, but to limit the powers of, their rulers" actually took place, so to speak.<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless, whatever impulses the period room might derive from, and perhaps because of its many other sources, it is by no means established *how* this technology can be employed.<sup>25</sup> E.P. Alexander, for instance, distinguishes carefully between the "Artistic" and the "Historical" period room. Each respectively aims to exhibit either the style of a given period

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<sup>23</sup> Frye, "The Beginning of the Period Room in American Museums," 237.

<sup>24</sup> R. T. H. Halsey, *Opening Addresses*, 11 (emphasis added).

<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, the significant variations in the character or use of period room technology tend to go unacknowledged particularly when they are discussed outside of museum studies discourse.

stressing “quality, connoisseurship, and taste,” or a rigorously accurate reproduction of an actual, historical place and time even when its results are unpleasing, distasteful, or politically inoperative.<sup>26</sup> Similar to the artistic variant, Dr. Albert Parr of the American Museum of Natural History sees them as the display of more furniture and objects “than any one room of the period would actually have possessed,” and far more than “one would encounter in any given spot,” much like the natural history museum’s collection of mammal family or kin groups to which he was accustomed.<sup>27</sup> For many others, the period room is a “setting” for the appropriate display of individual masterpieces. Berlin’s Pergamon museum, for instance, produced period rooms in the 1890s as “accompaniments” to masterwork paintings. These spaces were intended to replicate the kinds of environments for which the paintings were originally intended, rather than the actual historical locations in which they formerly appeared.<sup>28</sup>

Any one of the many precedents mentioned above might be followed to develop further insight into the goals, effects, and nuances of various forms of this technology of representation. To take a single example, the Colonial Kitchen exhibits which keyed into a growing popular taste for (and familiarity with) immersive utopian environments. These spaces are far more embedded in the discipline of architecture than the literature on these subjects initially suggests. Though it has yet to appear anywhere that I have come across, the significant emphasis on the

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<sup>26</sup> Alexander, “Artistic and Historical Period Rooms,” 272-274.

<sup>27</sup> Albert E. Parr, “Habitat Group and Period Room1.” *Curator: The Museum Journal* 6, no. 4 (October 1, 1963): 325–36; “Mood and Message,” *Curator: The Museum Journal*, Vol.6, Iss.3 (July 1963): 204-216. Quoted in Alexander, “Artistic and Historical Period Rooms.”

<sup>28</sup> The American Wing seems to have further developed this same sentiment and consciously employed an exhibition technique they deemed legitimate through its well-established European pedigree in order to reconstruct the environments for which early American domestic arts were themselves produced. This time, however, with a more explicitly politicized agenda to elevate American art to the standards of a Vermeer, as exhibited at the Pergamon Museum. See S. M. Can Bilsel. *Antiquity on Display: Regimes of the Authentic in Berlin’s Pergamon Museum* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2012), 152-157; Sally Anne Duncan, “Introduction.” *Visual Resources* 21, no. 3 (September 1, 2005): 228.

colonial kitchen as the primary subject matter for this early immersive experimentation, as well as the strongly gendered focus on describing and prescribing female roles for female spaces in large part by female-led organizations, suggests that the rise of the period room is further linked with the various social, political, and moral movements of the late nineteenth-century. I find it difficult not to jump across from the reconstructions of the colonial kitchen to the ever more rigorous analyses of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century farm kitchens by those involved in the Home Economics Movement; one which included many of the same personalities that would have been (or were) devoted to the emphasis on domestic interiors in the Philadelphia celebrations of 1876.<sup>29</sup> This topic reaches beyond the focus of this essay; however, it does suggest exciting potential for a revision of the relationship not just between well-known exhibitions like those in Philadelphia (1876) and Chicago (1893), but also the development of the discipline of architecture so strongly inflected by the Colonial Revival and moralizing pattern books. More closely related to the concerns of this thesis, this line of thought might suggest an alternative account of the relationship between the discipline of architecture and the period room recovered from its current quarantine within museum studies, proposing the period room as a means of architectural experimentation and analysis akin to the treatment of domestic architecture. Here I am thinking of both the way in which the narrative of early Modernism is told through a series of single family homes, and, more illustratively, that projects like Le Corbusier's 1924 Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau in Paris, France are not already discussed as an implementation of period room technology.

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<sup>29</sup> See for instance Liz Muller, "The Factory in the Kitchen: Scientific Management, Time-Motion Studies, and Domestic Efficiency, 1890-1920"; Athanasiou Geolas, "A New American Professional: Home Economists and Their Clients," (ed) D. Medina Lasansky, *Gastro Porn* (AAP Exhibition in collaboration with Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University), 2015, <http://mgb228.wixsite.com/gastro-porn> (Accessed 04 October 2016).

Along with the numerous applications of the period room's early antecedents, the mature form of period room technology has not eradicated the other paths which developed from them. Numerous display practices exist that resemble in some ways the period rooms deployed during their golden age between the 1920s and 40s, but which seek neither a sense of accuracy, nor historical reference as they expounded their political aspirations. A full account of what other kinds of rooms, spaces, and concepts developed out of the same beginnings remains to be done, but a few examples may help promote the consideration of period rooms as much more than straightforward museum displays. Some early experimenters with period room technology played a significant role in its early stages with a strong focus on the economic potential of well-crafted immersive environments. These included the stage sets of early Hollywood movies, department store displays, and even the forerunners of P.T. Barnum's later success. One might also consider the educational agenda of the Barnes Institute under the direction of Albert C. Bares and John Dewey with their "wall ensembles" bringing industrial art objects, domestic art objects, abstract painting, and early African art into carefully orchestrated, and continuously updated pedagogical projects.<sup>30</sup> Or, to the later work of Alexander Dorner in both the Landesmuseum in Hannover, Germany and the "Atmosphere Rooms" at the Museum of Rhode Island School of Design.<sup>31</sup> All of these spaces might loosely be defined as period rooms, but they have no strict period, and their pragmatic or scholarly agendas well exceed those of "accurate" historical representation.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> On this same point one might look to the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle established by Historian and Archaeologist Henry Mercer. See "About: Mercer Museum," *Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle*, <https://www.mercermuseum.org/about/mercero-museum/> (Accessed 10:58, 14 November 2016).

<sup>31</sup> See Curt Germundson, "Alexander Dorner's Atmosphere Room: The Museum as Experience," *Visual Resources* 21, no. 3 (September 1, 2005): 263–73.

<sup>32</sup> Kristina Wilson's article on the MMA's 1929 exhibition "The Architect and the Industrial Arts" in which the museum displayed "modern" interiors "derived from displays of modern furnishings in New York department stores, modernist movie sets, and the American Wing period rooms at the museum itself." For engaging



By the time the Shaker room was under construction in the American Wing of the 1970s, period rooms were *not* the obvious exhibition strategy for a new construction project from the perspective of either museum professionals or museum studies scholars. When the American Wing announced that they were going to construct a series of new period rooms as part of their expansion, their efforts emerged in part (un-intentionally or otherwise) as an extension of contemporary architectural discourse. Although the American Wing would not typically be deemed relevant for a discussion of architectural theory, the construction timeline of the Shaker room spanned what architectural historian Jean-Louis Cohen has called “the postmodern season.” The development of the Shaker room constituted an instance of the American Wing’s response to a growing interest in both historical meaning, and specifically “American” architecture.<sup>33</sup> In the years leading up to the US bicentennial in 1976, the American Wing threw their lot in with the rest of the country’s historical fervor by reinvigorating traditional display methods, producing new exhibitions and publications, and (once again) asserting the importance of the history of American architectural interiors. For example, the “Nineteenth-Century America” exhibit and the “Rise of American Architecture” exhibit and book with essays from both Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Vincent Scully in 1970. Scully’s essay, “American Houses: Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright,” well expresses the American Wing’s dissolution of

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commentary on the operational role of this “installation architecture” see Kristina Wilson, “Style and Lifestyle in the Machine Age: The Modernist Period Rooms of ‘The Architect and the Industrial Arts,’” *Visual Resources* 21, no. 3 (September 1, 2005): 245–61.

<sup>33</sup> A trend in which the Shakers were an equally significant part even if decidedly marginal to architectural discourse. Jean-Louis Cohen, *The Future of Architecture. Since 1889*, (London: Phaidon, 2012), 412-23. Shaker reproduction chairs, for instance, are rumored to have been specified in Robert Venturi’s renovation of the Institute for Fine Art’s Duke House on 5<sup>th</sup> Ave near the MMA.

former boundaries between domestic arts and American architecture, while investing the American Wing as the arbiter of the foundations to American architectural history.<sup>34</sup>

The many versions, contexts, and functions towards which period rooms have been employed as discussed in the paragraphs above makes it far easier to draw connections between the new period rooms of the American Wing, and other period-room-like constructs of the 1970s more well known to architectural history. Opening an entirely new set of rooms, which more than ever before treated architecture as a work of art in its own regard, this part of the American Wing's expansion roughly coincides with the first appearance of the discipline of architecture within the Venice Biennale. Indeed, looking again at each of the constructs lining the hall of the Arsenale in 1980 during the aptly titled theme, "Presence of the Past," begs a comparison with period room technology and its many precedents (Figure 1.3).<sup>35</sup> Though not the subject of this thesis, the link between the architectural discourse of Postmodernism and the re-emergence of period room construction cannot be seen as mere coincidence, and would certainly reward a more in depth inquiry.

Rather than address further versions of how period room technology and its historiography might affect the interpretation of works of architecture, however, there is another more pertinent path through which to bring period rooms into architectural discourse. In order to consider the period room in terms of the discipline of architecture, one must challenge directly

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<sup>34</sup> Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. (ed.), *The Rise of an American Architecture*. (New York: Published in association with the Metropolitan Museum of Art by Praeger, 1970).

<sup>35</sup> *Architecture 1980: The Presence of the Past: Venice Biennale*, (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1980). See esp. "The 'Strada Novissima,'" pp. 38-48. For an account of the "Strad Novissima" within architectural discourse see Léa-Catherine Szacka, "Historicism Versus Communication: The Basic Debate of the 1980 Biennale," *Architectural Design* 81, no. 5 (September 1, 2011): 98–105; Charles Jencks, "La Strada Novissima: The 1980 Venice Biennale," *Domusweb.it*, <http://www.domusweb.it/en/from-the-archive/2012/08/25/-em-la-strada-novissima-em-the-1980-venice-biennale.html> (Accessed 04 October 2016).



the privilege afforded their position in museum studies. Scholarship addressing or making reference to period rooms tends to be concerned with museum studies or museum practice. I say tends to, but I have yet (in my research to date) found a serious consideration of the period room that is not concerned explicitly with a history, criticism, or proposition for museums. Carol Duncan's 1990 book *Civilizing Rituals*, provides a significant challenge to the privileges typically afforded museum work.<sup>36</sup> Duncan asserts that museum spaces are not neutral conduits of museological content, nor are they inherently less real or affective than any other architectural space. In fact, when treated simply as contemporary spaces (rather than leaving them cordoned off in museums or its scholarship), and analyzed accordingly, Duncan finds that the museum exhibitions posit a "ritualistic structure" that had otherwise been overlooked.

In 2012, architectural historian Can Bilsel takes Duncan's initial challenge one step further in his book *Antiquity on Display*. Once treated as a "modern interior" rather than a neutral conduit for knowledge, history, or experience, Bilsel discovers that the galleries displaying ancient architecture at the Pergamon Museum unfold present-tense experiences for visitors. Once addressed as a contemporary work of architecture these spaces allow for an alternative approach for the architectural historian, bringing focus to the design, representation, and fabrication of museum galleries as works of contemporary architecture.<sup>37</sup> Taking up this challenge, I intend to treat the Shaker period room as relevant to the history of architecture beyond its projection, distortion, or production of cultural meaning. Much like the ritual experiences Duncan initially uncovered, or the architectural constructions Bilsel unpacks, this thesis considers period rooms to be contemporary works of architecture in their own right, which although employed as a

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<sup>36</sup> Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>37</sup> See, for instance, Amanda Reeser Lawrence, "Preservation through Replication: The Barnes Foundation," *Future Anterior* 12, no. 1 (2015): 1+.

technology of visualization, *must* remain subject to the full range of disciplinary and pragmatic concerns afforded all other works of architecture.

#### ***1.4. Shaker Architecture***

Each of the subsequent two chapters of this thesis deals with the historiography of architecture and of the Shakers as the context calls for it. Following a brief introduction of the Shakers here, I will address the architectural historians who have helped frame them and their architectural practice. The term “Shakers” is a popular identifier for a religious group with a complex and conflicting lineage named “The United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing.”<sup>38</sup> Although the members of what became a highly codified religious organization by 1821 employed this popular term frequently and in many contexts, the shortened name has made it very easy to forget the fact that this group is first and foremost a society based on strong religious beliefs, and *not* a community of craftsmen.<sup>39</sup> The Shakers believed in a form of Millennialism, which held that Christ had already returned, and it was everyone’s duty to purify their bodies, their lives, and the earth for this thousand years of heaven on earth prior to final Judgement.<sup>40</sup> Although this religion was founded in 1776 and continues today, the Shakers have

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<sup>38</sup> The term “Shakers”—or “Shaking Quakers”—is commonly linked to the ecstatic dancing practices, sometimes called the “whirling gift,” first learned and then encouraged by Ann Lee. This term followed the Shakers when they emigrated from Manchester, England in 1774 and their official title was first instituted with the United States of America. For a brief history of this background see Stephen J. Stein, *The Shaker Experience in America: A History of the United Society of Believers*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 3–14.

<sup>39</sup> For an early twentieth-century overview of Shakerism from the perspective of Shakers who once lived in the building from which this period room was in part constructed, see Ana White and Leila S. Taylor (North Family of Shakers, Mount Lebanon, N.Y.), *Shakerism: Its Meaning and Message*, first reprint edition (New York, NY: AMS Press Inc., 1971).

<sup>40</sup> Frederick William Evans, *Shakers. Compendium of the Origin, History, Principles, Rules and Regulations, Government, and Doctrines of the United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing. With Biographies of Ann Lee, William Lee, Jas. Whittaker, J. Hocknell, J. Meacham, and Lucy Wright*. (New York: D. Appleton, 1859).

been most well-known since the 1960s as a successful utopian-socialist community of the mid-nineteenth century.

Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Shakers expressed many beliefs, and inspired many individuals and groups in ways now frequently forgotten. For instance, the Shakers were self-avowed Communists and Materialists.<sup>41</sup> Elder Frederick William Evans, another Shaker Brother once living in the North Family Dwelling, spent his life proselytizing the Shaker message. He published books like *Shaker Communism* in 1871, and went on a lecture series through the United Kingdom that same year which he titled “Religious Communism.”<sup>42</sup> This was much more than a passing rhetorical flourish connected to late-nineteenth-century American Socialism; according to Friedrich Engels writing with Karl Marx c.1840, “the first people in America, and indeed in the world who brought into realization a society founded on the community of property were the so-called Shakers.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> There is a good amount of literature on Shaker Communism aside from that produced by the Shakers themselves. For other scholarly accounts see Henri Desroche, *The American Shakers: From Neo-Christianity to Presocialism* (trans. from French, and ed.) John K. Savacool, (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1971); Charles Nordhoff, *The Communist Societies of The United States; From Personal Visit and Observation: Including Detailed Accounts of The Economists, Zoarites, Shakers, The Amana, Oneida, Bethel, Aurora, Icarian, and other Existing Societies, Their Religious Creeds, Social Practices, Numbers, Industries, and Present Condition*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1875).

<sup>42</sup> It is important to note that Shakerism took up Communism following Ann Lee’s death in the early nineteenth century. The next generation of Shaker leaders thought communal property and strict social order to be an effective means to unify the community, and ultimately make them more successful in their mission. F.W. Evans’ sense of Shakerism c.1850-80 comes after decades of communal living and reflects what might be called a mature form of Shaker Communism. However, it just as easily might be termed as a distortion of their founding prophet’s inspirations. See Frederick William Evans, *Shaker Communism; or, Tests of Divine Inspiration. The Second Christian or Gentile Pentecostal Church, As Exemplified by Seventy Communities of Shakers in America*, (London: James Burns, 1871). Reprinted from London edition, (New York, NY: AMS Press, Inc., 1974). For more on the transformation into later “gospel order” see Julie Nicoletta, “Structures for Communal Life: Shaker Dwelling Houses at Mount Lebanon, New York” (Ph.D., Yale University 1993), 354-55. For an account of the Shaker’s relationship to “profit,” “wages,” “surplus value,” and so on, look to Edward Deming Andrews, *Work and Worship: The Economic Order of the Shakers* (Greenwich, CN: New York Graphic Society, 1974).

<sup>43</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Historische-Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin, 1932), Erste Abteilung, Band 4, p. 352. Quoted in Feuer’s excellent article. See Lewis S. Feuer, “The Influence of the American Communist Colonies on Engels and Marx.” *The Western Political Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (September 1966): 456-474, 461n15. Feuer continues explaining on the same page:

But this is only one of many legacies predominantly expunged from much current scholarship and general popular perception of the Shakers.<sup>44</sup> In 1954, amidst the early ideological turmoil of the Cold War, the Shakers were still recognized (with difficulty and derision) for their communist past. A book review in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* notes: “In a day when communism is under examination and condemnation, it is interesting to remember that the United States housed many a communist group.” The book here reviewed is Edward Deming Andrews’s *The People Called Shakers* (1953). Andrews, the review tells us,

finds the roots of [the Shaker’s ultimate] failure, not in the essential religious experience of the group, but in its communal experience. Its economics and organization were faulty. The reader will discern that some of the economic factors which caused the shaker communistic experiment to fail constitute the seeds of dissolution in communism itself.<sup>45</sup>

Andrews and this book will be discussed below in Chapter 2, but for the time being it should be noted that the legacy of Andrews’s book has little (if anything) to do with such ideological disagreements. Instead, it marks the resurgence of precisely that image of simple, functionalist

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“Engels described them at length, their strange religious opinions, their prohibition of both marriage and sexual intercourse. Their peculiarities, he said, however, were of little moment. For their ten large communities, each with three to eight hundred members, were beautiful, orderly, well-constructed towns with homes, factories, workshops, barns, meeting-houses. ... An English traveler who visited the Shakers, Engels said, had found them so affluent that he could not understand why they worked. Evidently they did so out of pure amusement. Nobody worked unwillingly, no one was unemployed, there were no poorhouses or hospitals, no one suffering from need. Here, indeed (in Engels' later terminology), the state had withered away.”

For an account much less idealized than Engels’s of the Shaker’s affluence, freedom from undesirable labor, and the *relevance* (and not dismissal) of their religious “peculiarities” see Janet Sarbanes, “The Shaker ‘Gift’ Economy: Charisma, Aesthetic Practice and Utopian Communalism,” *Utopian Studies* 20, no. 1 (March 2009): 121–39.

<sup>44</sup> Refer again to Tom Sach’s interpretation in the MMA’s 2015 season of *The Artists’ Project* for a typically dismissive view of Shaker Communism.

<sup>45</sup> Clarence Seidenspinner, “Shakers--the Earlier Commies,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1923-1963), January 3, 1954, sec. PART 4.

craftsmen whose devout labor produces artefacts which correspond well to what people tend to think when they hear the words “Shaker Design.” Thus, this review demonstrates one of many early steps in the suppression of undesirable components in a living religion.

Another fundamental tenet of Shakerism de-emphasized today concerns the belief that Christ had returned as a woman named Ann Lee. According to the Shakers, God was in fact equal parts Man and Woman. And another suppressed legacy of Shakerism shows that Shaker legal disputes provided an early catalyst for American divorce law and women’s custody rights.<sup>46</sup> Such limited popular perceptions preserve in large part due to representations like the “Shaker Retiring Room” which attempt to exemplify “the Shakers” more than Shakerism or the place of Shaker communities in American history.

The most common stories about the Shakers cast them from the perspective of their material culture. This particular historiographical angle prioritized Shaker furniture. Furthermore, the legacy of the Shaker’s twentieth-century documentation as part of the American arts and crafts movement has been so successful and enduring that the popular imagination of Shakers up to the present tends to evoke ladder-back chairs hung on walls almost immediately. Perhaps more significantly, this public sentiment driven by scholarly focus has so thoroughly taken over that the more politically, socially, and theologically contested positions of

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<sup>46</sup> Becoming a Shaker required the signing of a contract. Husbands, wives, and their children would often join at the same time. Children at this point in American History had significant economic value insofar as they provided substantial labor-power. When a man decided to leave the Shakers, his children tended to be released from their contract and returned to his custody. When women apostatized, on the other hand, they were frequently refused custody of their children. This, along with the transfer of orphans across great distances and state lines between Shaker communities, lead to many protracted legal battles over fair treatment, equal rights for women, and the early stages of women’s custody rights. See Mary M. Dyer, Elizabeth A. De Wolfe, and Joseph Dyer, *Domestic Broils: Shakers, Antebellum Marriage, and the Narratives of Mary and Joseph Dyer* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010); Elizabeth A. De Wolfe, *Shaking the Faith: Women, Family, and Mary Marshall Dyer’s Anti-Shaker Campaign, 1815-1867* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); “Mary Marshall Dyer, Gender, and A Portraiture of Shakerism.” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 8, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 237–64. For a review see Sarbanes, “The Shaker ‘Gift’ Economy.”



Shakerism before the 1930s has become wholly subservient to the place of the so-called Shaker aesthetic or Shaker style in American historiography. Shaker historian Stephen J. Stein suggests in his book *The Shaker Experience in America* that this emphasis on furniture making and material culture constitutes the primary dilemma for those who write about the Shakers today. That is to say, any architectural history that discusses the Shakers must contend with a discourse that builds off of an entirely different set of concerns. Where for Stein the historian's agenda is to bring the Shakers back into the full scope of their historical condition (notably by re-centralizing the Shaker's nuanced religious convictions as the primary reason for forming a community), the task for architectural history is no less partial than that of material culture or furniture studies. Rather than seeking a complete account, in the following I hope to provide an informed architectural historical account of the "Shaker Retiring Room"; an account which necessarily must address the positioning of Shaker architecture and its historical documentation as it appears in this historical visualization.

To that end, there are three architectural historians concerned directly with Shaker Architecture: Dolores Hayden, Julie Nicoletta, and Arthur E. McLendon. All three authors are discussed and footnoted throughout with regards to the argument of this thesis; here, however, I will focus on the variations in their interest in Shaker architecture. Dolores Hayden although most well-known for her work on American domesticity and the expansion of the suburb, published her first article *and* first book concerned directly with Shaker architecture.<sup>47</sup> In her 1973 article "'The Social Architects' and Their Architecture of Social Change," which appeared

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<sup>47</sup> See also Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1981); *Redesigning the American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work, and Family Life* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984); *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003).

tellingly in *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Sciences*, Hayden's account of Shaker architecture seeks to provide a set of rules, and a road-map to a successful communitarian form of life.<sup>48</sup> What role, she asks, does environmental design play in the materialization of a communitarian utopia within a fully embodied social reality? Published in 1976, *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism* is a product of this same interest in early American utopian movements re-invigorated by counter-cultural movements.<sup>49</sup> Hayden delivers a truly insightful reading of Shaker architecture in its relation to several communitarian projects from the late 1790s up to the 1970s.<sup>50</sup>

From this early moment in Hayden's scholarship, there is one further source of inspiration worth mentioning here. In 1978 Hayden reviewed a new edition (1975) of Catherine E. Beecher's book *The American Woman's Home or Principles of Domestic Science* (1869) for the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians (JSAH)*.<sup>51</sup> The frontispiece of this book had appeared already in *Seven American Utopias* as an example of a Liberal utopia against which the Shakers were laboring. Her review keys into her own scholarly work to show "Beecher the

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<sup>48</sup> Dolores Hayden, "The 'Social Architects' and Their Architecture of Social Change." *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 9, no. 2–3 (March 1, 1973): 182–98.

<sup>49</sup> Dolores Hayden, *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1976). For a similar (if less optimistic about counter-cultural potential) account from a Shaker Historian refer to Rosabeth Kanter, who intends "to demonstrate to those who feel that communes are impractical, impossible, or unrealizable that in the past a number of utopian communities have in fact been successes" (vii). Rosabeth Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).

<sup>50</sup> For reviews of Hayden's *Seven American Utopias* see H. Roger Grant, "Review of *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975*, by Dolores Hayden." *American Historical Review* 82, no. 4 (October 1977): 1086; Clifford E. Clark, "Review of *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975*, by Dolores Hayden." *New York History* 59, no. 2 (1978): 239–40. Stanley Buder, "Review of *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975*, by Dolores Hayden." *Labor History* 20, no. 3 (Summer 1979): 444.

<sup>51</sup> Dolores Hayden, "Review of *The American Woman's Home or Principles of Domestic Science; Being a Guide to the Formation and Maintenance of Economical, Healthful, Beautiful and Christian Homes* (1869), by Catharine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 37, no. 4 (1978): 311–12.

designer, behind Beecher the domestic scientist.” Her point seems to be a thoroughgoing acknowledgement that Beecher’s “goals were breathtakingly political,” and to suggest it is unfortunate that she employed considerable ability to reinforce nuclear family structure. Despite the praise given by Giedion and Banham on her technical innovations in the home, in other words, Hayden brought to light Beecher’s attempts “to make gender more important than class [and] to prevent any disturbance of the American economic system.”<sup>52</sup> Ultimately, Hayden’s criticism of Beecher is damning, she concludes that “Beecher laid the foundations of the “feminine mystique” Betty Friedan was concerned with a century later.”<sup>53</sup> Much of Hayden’s work over the course of her career can be understood as inaugurated by a point of contact between the (Shaker) communitarian ideal and the ideal home of liberal, middle-class America. Hayden’s work could be understood as attempting to balance Liberal morality with Communitarian ideals, arguing that typical American morality would do much better work were it attempting to realize the ideal of a collectively-held reality. I follow Hayden’s insistence on the link between political ideas and the methods and beliefs deployed in the production of works of architecture. My own political concerns, however, have more to do with moral ambiguity in such actions over a more operative re-scripting of historical personalities.

Unlike Hayden’s focus on Shaker design and building practice and its emancipatory potential, Julie Nicoletta turned to the practical effects of Shaker buildings on their inhabitants. Nicoletta first sought to revise Shaker historiography in her 1993 dissertation by situating Shaker architecture firmly within the historical context of the nineteenth century. Arguing that Shaker architecture grew out of this period’s reform impulse, Nicoletta claims they held a common

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<sup>52</sup> Hayden, “Review of *The American Woman’s Home*,” 311.

<sup>53</sup> Hayden, “Review of *The American Woman’s Home*,” 312.

“desire for order in an age of rapid industrialization and change,” and that they typify a tendency to establish institutions away from urban centers to combat this tumultuous reality by regulating individual behavior.<sup>54</sup> In her 2003 article in the *JSAH*, “The Architecture of Control: Shaker Dwelling Houses and the Reform Movement in Early-Nineteenth-Century America,” Nicoletta continued this work comparing plans of the North Family Dwelling in Mount Lebanon with the first-hand accounts of Shakers living in that building to gain a better understanding of the relationships between individual perception, social hierarchies, and an architecture, according to her argument, built to control behavior.<sup>55</sup> For the Shakers, according to Nicoletta, “architectural orthodoxy could better reinforce religious and social rules of behavior.”<sup>56</sup>

Nicoletta’s analysis of Shaker buildings as “inward-looking environments” takes its cue from Michel Foucault’s analysis of the Jeremy Bentham’s “panopticon.” Shaker dwelling houses and meetinghouses in Nicoletta’s reading of them, like Foucault’s panopticon, are visual instruments that discipline individual behavior.<sup>57</sup> This is a surprisingly un-spiritual interpretation (particularly given the subject matter) of a Foucault who emphasized that Enlightenment constructions like the panopticon diagram might have sought to make our bodies docile, but

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<sup>54</sup> Julie Nicoletta, “Structures for Communal Life: Shaker Dwelling Houses at Mount Lebanon, New York” (Ph.D., Yale University, 1993), p.353.

<sup>55</sup> Commenting on a recent exhibition: Julie Nicoletta, “Review: Shaker in Chicago: Three Exhibitions on Shaker Art, Design, and Architecture,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 74, no. 4 (December 1, 2015): 517–19. On the Shaker period room at the Philadelphia Museum of Art: Julie Nicoletta, “Sisters’ Retiring Room from the North Family Dwelling, Mount Lebanon, New York, Ca. 1845,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 46, no. 2/3 (June 2012): E37–43. On Shaker Architecture more generally see Julie Nicoletta, “The Architecture of Control: Shaker Dwelling Houses and the Reform Movement in Early-Nineteenth-Century America,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 62, no. 3 (September 2003): 352–8; *The Architecture of the Shakers*, 1st ed. (Woodstock, VT: Countryman Press, 1995).

<sup>56</sup> Nicoletta, “Structures for Communal Life,” 355.

<sup>57</sup> See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); and Nicoletta, “The Architecture of Control.”

worked on our “souls.”<sup>58</sup> Likewise, in her 2001 article “The Gendering of Order and Disorder,” Nicoletta argues that the rationalization of Shaker life through the imposition of the *Millennial Laws* and its “architectural orthodoxy” marks not only a transition from Mother Ann’s leadership to that of Brother Whittaker, Brother Meacham, and Mother Lucy, but also a re-gendering of Shaker leadership.<sup>59</sup> “Domestication,” Nicoletta writes, “became a perceived means of maintaining control over a rapidly changing world.”<sup>60</sup> Such a view demonstrates clearly Nicoletta’s departure from Hayden’s earlier and much more optimistic Marxist-Feminist analysis of Shaker architecture. Despite my disagreements with her ultimate account, and (as will be seen) her use of certain kinds of documentation in her analyses, I am indebted to Nicoletta’s readings of Shaker dwelling houses, and in particular, her insistence on including first-hand accounts of those who not only helped construct, but also once lived in these spaces. I will extend an adaptation of her method to the analysis of the Shaker room, if in a somewhat subversive fashion.

Most recently in 2013, Arthur E. McLendon published some of his dissertation work in the journal *Buildings and Landscapes*.<sup>61</sup> Here McLendon departs from both Hayden’s and Nicoletta’s prior focus on utopian building practice and broad reform context in order to address

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<sup>58</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

<sup>59</sup> Julie Nicoletta, “The Gendering of Order and Disorder: Mother Ann Lee and Shaker Architecture,” *New England Quarterly* 74, no. 2 (2001): 303.

<sup>60</sup> It is ironic that during this moment in history while women of the outside world were gaining a certain amount of authority and autonomy through the rationalization of the home with domestic science, the rationalization of the dwelling house (if we are to follow Nicoletta) was removing women from places of authority within Shaker communities. For Nicoletta, the “imposition” (rather than the gift) of gospel order equaled the end of Ann Lee’s religious enthusiasm (309). Nicoletta, “The Gendering of Order and Disorder,” 314.

<sup>61</sup> Arthur E. McLendon, “‘Leap and Shout, Ye Living Building!’: Ritual Performance and Architectural Collaboration in Early Shaker Meetinghouses,” *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum* 20, no. 2 (2013): 48–76; “‘Ye Living Building’: Spirit, Space, and Ritual Encounter in Shaker Architecture” (Ph.D., University of Virginia, 2010).

Shaker architecture as not just a result, but as something that participates with people. Despite his difference in emphasis, however, McLendon ultimately lands on a conclusion similar to Hayden's: Shaker works of architecture help to display collective Shaker identity. However, for McLendon, they do so through an active collaboration in the literal performance of Shaker worshiping practices. By investigating the unique material constitution of the floor structure in a Shaker meetinghouse, McLendon argues that these structures are "not only a passive, venerable witness of the long arc of Shaker history but also a ritual *participant*, shaping movement and song into exuberant millennial praise."<sup>62</sup> Although in my own analysis of the Shaker period room I attempt to set the performance of identity somewhat to the side, I view my analysis as very much in line with McLendon's insistence on the collaboration of material presence, embodied faith, and embedded structural parameters in the meaning and life of a work of architecture. All three authors are required reading for the history of Shaker architecture; between them, while remaining in close conversation with one another, one can find three distinct and divergent trajectories for architectural history each deriving from a Shaker architecture typically deemed "simple," "pure," and long since passed away.

Along with those architectural historians that have directly attended to Shaker architecture, there are a few who have mentioned them at significant junctures within American architectural historiography. Each of these will be discussed within the following two chapters as they are relevant for the narrative, and so here I will simply refer to them. In 1924, Lewis Mumford published *Sticks & Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization* in which he described the development of a specifically American architecture from out of what he calls "The Medieval tradition." The Shakers provide a key anchor in Mumford's discussion acting as

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<sup>62</sup> McLendon, "'Leap and Shout, Ye Living Building!'," 48 (emphasis in original).

what he seems to intend as a well-known reference point for communal-living in the United States. This apparent notability of Shaker villages in Mumford's account will figure prominently in the pages to come, as will his presentation of the Shakers as a key moment, which although still accessible to visitors today embodies America's past. Nearly two decades later, Sigfried Giedion in *Space, Time, and Architecture: the Growth of a New Tradition* (1941) refers to the Shakers again as a marker for America's innovative origins. The Shakers stand as a characteristic example of "American Functionalism" through the stark appearance of their un-ornamented facade treatment. Finally, and although he does not include any commentary on the Shakers directly, Nikolaus Pevsner in *Pioneers of Modern Design: from William Morris to Walter Gropius* (1936) does presage the later historiographical focus in architecture on material culture, and he also, importantly, sets the precedent for inquiry into the place of domestic art and design in the analysis of works of architecture and architectural discourse. Though I disagree with Pevsner's specific focus, I view this analysis in that lineage.

Of course, there are a number of other books that address Shaker architecture which I do not consider part of the discipline of architectural history, as there are books tremendously important to an architectural history of the Shakers that are not written by architectural historians. If relevant in the sections that follow they appear and are cited, but this thesis is not intended to itself revise the historiography of Shaker architecture, and so I do not address this literature here. At most, I intend to prod Shaker studies with the hope of destabilizing the too-obvious appearance of the "Shaker Retiring Room." I do situate my own analysis of this period room within Shaker Studies more broadly. To this end the analysis and production of a *Finding Aid* (Appendix B) for the American Wing's Shaker Folders (AWSF), their files documenting the

story of the “Shaker Retiring Room’s” development, constitute an original contribution to Shaker Studies.

Only one scholarly work directly addresses the American Wing’s Shaker period room as such. In 2007 Stephen Bowe and Peter Richmond published *Selling Shaker: The Commodification of Shaker Design in the Twentieth Century*. This is a rigorous, cynical, and seemingly comprehensive (if somewhat a-critical) account of the commodification of the Shakers, Shaker style, and the Shaker aesthetic throughout the twentieth century.<sup>63</sup> Their narrative places the “Shaker Retiring Room” within the context of the five other Shaker period rooms that exist in the world. It is in large part because of the extent of their research that I defer a popular appraisal of these circumstances to Bowe & Richmond, and their critics. Not only is a full account of popular perception beyond the scope of this thesis, but to address the reception of the Shakers or the Shaker Room is to turn focus away from the details most pertinent for analyzing the labor, documents, and beliefs that literally constructed the Shaker room.

### ***1.5. Four Methodological Cues***

I take four methodological cues toward writing an architectural history of the Shaker period room. First, I consider the “Shaker Retiring Room” a case study. Second, I acknowledge the specific impact of documents, documentation, and other technologies of representation. Third, I reframe an ideological critique of this architecture. And, fourth, I investigate the labor that produced it. These four parameters provide a way of working through the analysis of the

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<sup>63</sup> Bowe and Richmond, *Selling Shaker*. For a thorough and important critical review see William D. Moore, “Book Reviews Stephen Bowe and Peter Richmond *Selling Shaker: The Commodification of Shaker Design in the Twentieth Century*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007. x+404 Pp.; 56 Black-and-white Illustrations, Index. \$40.00,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 43, no. 4 (December 2009): 409–11.



“Shaker Retiring Room”; rather than definitive statements of faith, they help to exclude certain questions while suggesting others for approaching this peculiar work of architecture.

The first methodological cue consists of treating the Shaker room as a case study. There are two benefits that arise from this: First, case studies privilege the atypical over the quotidian. They bring definition to ambiguous circumstances, which are, nevertheless, known to be relevant or are the cause of some disagreement. Analyzing a single, unique instance provides understanding-in-detail where understanding-in-general has either proven insufficient, or where taking account of average instances avoids addressing the problem at hand. I will demonstrate in the following two chapters that the case of the Shaker room has relevance to architectural history at large, by virtue of its specific and exemplary circumstances.<sup>64</sup> Second, case studies may also be deployed as a means to keep the question or its object open to shifting parameters. In the words of Lauren Berlant, case studies enable a “discussion to proceed in the absence of agreement about the object’s contours.”<sup>65</sup> Thus, rather than leading toward more clearly defined boundaries, the case study might take an object that seems well-bounded and re-instate situational contingencies previously excluded. This mode of discussion allows the analyst to pursue a line of inquiry not only in the detail of *thick description*, but also in collaboration with other discussants without relinquishing potential points of disagreement.<sup>66</sup> That is to say, case

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<sup>64</sup> Jean-Louis Cohen warned against such “microhistories” in his keynote address at the 2016 European Architectural History Network’s biannual conference in Dublin. Alternatively, Cohen suggested we favor more expansive architectural timelines that seek to periodize the history of architecture in terms of architectural (rather than economic, political, or popular) transformations. I appreciate the provocation at least as much as I find it problematic.

<sup>65</sup> Berlant introduces the concept of *the case* for a thematic issue of *Critical Inquiry*. See Lauren Berlant, “On the Case,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 33, No. 4, On the Case (Summer 2007): 663-672.

<sup>66</sup> For more on “thick” description see Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

studies allow discussants to disagree without ending the conversation.<sup>67</sup> As I will show, the constitution, boundaries, and aspirations for (and of) the “Shaker Retiring Room” are anything but settled and unified. In fact, they will remain central to the following analysis in their multiplicity in part because of the disagreements period room technology tends to obscure.

While some may deem such detailed analysis of a single period room in the American Wing too limited in scope to remain relevant to the discipline of architectural history, my intention here – derived from the difficulties I experienced in attempting to analyze this room – is directed more toward the development of a method, than of claiming some truth about architecture or its history. As will be seen, the questions asked of an object not only dictate the kinds of answers one receives, but also reinforce, in some cases, the very aims one may be attempting to criticize. Exposing the nuance unique to this example offers pointed commentary relevant to the historiography of architecture at large.

The second cue leads to a close analysis of documents and documentation strategies. In a recent *Field Note* within the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Mary Louise Lobsinger has diagnosed a “turn from Culture to Media.” For Lobsinger, this is a turn towards “a mode of research that attempts to track the concrete procedural networks and the materiality of cultural techniques that precondition architecture prior to its end form.”<sup>68</sup> Lobsinger writes this note to mark what she sees as a trend in contemporary scholarship which “deliberately unsettles

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<sup>67</sup> This method contrasts sharply with other modes of analysis. Walter Benn Michaels’s criticism will be addressed later in this section, but for now the question of disagreement is necessarily a question of belief. Perhaps, however, the case-study suggests a method whereby disagreeing parties might (paradoxically) play by the same rules. Nevertheless, (as I imagine Michaels would retort) this may just be the engrained fantasy of Liberalism paralleling belief’s inability to see beyond its own horizon. See Walter Benn Michaels, *The Shape of the Signifier: 1967 to the End of History* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), (esp.) pp.32, 189n18 on the rules of the game.

<sup>68</sup> See Mary Louise Lobsinger, “Architectural History: The Turn from Culture to Media,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Field Note, Vol.75, Iss.2 (June 2016): 135-139.

culture based studies,” and is no longer interested in cultural artifacts themselves, but rather in their modes of operation within the cultural field. “This methodological turn,” Lobsinger states, “leans on concepts and research strategies that have evolved over several decades within other disciplines, such as the history of science, science technology studies, media studies, and German media philosophy.” I agree with Lobsinger.

In recent years there have been numerous studies concerning the significant role of documents in cultural production.<sup>69</sup> These analyses have had a significant impact on the way in which I approach the analysis of this work of architecture. Documents are “evidential structures,” according to media theorist Lisa Gitelman. They are “epistemic objects; [and] they are the recognizable sites and subjects of interpretation across the disciplines and beyond.”<sup>70</sup> The period room is itself a document, as much as the photographs, lists, and other pieces of paper saved in the American Wing’s files. Likewise, the scholarship of German lawyer, legal historian, and media theorist Cornelia Vismann has been particularly important in framing this analysis. Vismann’s work acknowledges the link between technologies of representation and the types of concepts they make available.<sup>71</sup>

Although not associated with architectural history, Vismann’s scholarship helps address the “Shaker Retiring Room” without succumbing to the parameters period room technology

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<sup>69</sup> For example, see Lisa Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014); Ben Kafka, *The Demon of Writing: Powers and Failures of Paperwork* (New York: Zone Books, 2012); Cornelia Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology*. Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics. (trans) Geoffrey Winthrop-Young (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2008); Annelise Riles (ed), *Documents: Artifacts of Modern Knowledge* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006); Jacques Derrida, *Paper Machine*, (trans.) Rachel Bowlby, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005); *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, (trans) Eric Prenowitz (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

<sup>70</sup> Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge*, 1.

<sup>71</sup> See Vismann’s obituary in Peer Zumbansen, Russel Miller, and Alexandra Kemerer, “Obituary,” *German Law Journal*, Vol.11 No.9 (2010): 965.

establishes for the analysis of its products. Her 2008 book *Files: Law and Media Technology* opens with a reference to the Babylonian scale and never-ending “mushrooming” of paperwork: “Their incessant proliferation,” she writes, “seems a natural phenomenon.”<sup>72</sup> But as a file’s reproduction appears natural it also seems to be authorless much like early accounts of vernacular architecture.<sup>73</sup> Paperwork accounts for others while frequently remaining unaccountable itself.<sup>74</sup> But, architecture, as opposed to files, evokes no such unintended proliferation; buildings do not sprout, they are built – and someone usually makes a profit. Where files circulate, multiply, and topple out of their containers, architecture appears to stand still, singular and coherent across time: files are moved, period rooms are moved through. Despite this difference in perception, files and period rooms, in this instance, might have a similar technological structure. That is to say, when one considers the period room as something akin to the file, Vismann provides insights into interpreting and evaluating the period room without remaining beholden to what the period room is supposed to mean to a visitor. Instead, one might focus on how the period room gathers together various kinds of information, authority, and documents.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Vismann, *Files*, xi.

<sup>73</sup> See, for instance, Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture without Architects: An Introduction to Nonpedigreed Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art; distributed by Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1964); Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, “Native Genius in Anonymous Architecture,” in *Native Genius in Anonymous Architecture in North America* (New York: Schocken Books, 1996). Here also see Dell Upton’s revisionist account of Vernacular anonymity. Dell Upton, “Outside the Academy: A Century of Vernacular Architecture Studies, 1890-1990,” *Studies in the History of Art, The Architectural Historian in America*, 35 (1990): 199–213.

<sup>74</sup> For more on this see Donna Haraway concept of “feminist objectivity.” Haraway’s focus on moral responsibility via individual accountability could extend Vismann’s discussion to human subjects. See Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575–99.

<sup>75</sup> Vismann, *Files*, xi.

In the following chapters I adapt Vismann's critical insights and bring them to bear on the case of the "Shaker Retiring Room." Bringing definition to the "Law," Vismann addressed this abstract discipline "not as an instrument or medium... but as a repository of forms... that assume concrete shape in files."<sup>76</sup> Likewise, here, architecture is neither analyzed as instrument nor medium, but rather as a solidification of forms of power into the material shape of a period room. In her preface to the English edition of her book, Vismann writes that "law and files mutually determine each other." And further that, "a given recording technology entails specific forms and instances of the law. A new way of binding or of writing things down, a change in the way data are collected, affects the legal framework."<sup>77</sup> For Vismann, files (if spoken about "beyond their varying historical concretions") are "*that which generates a certain type of law.*"<sup>78</sup> Unconcerned with the content of the various files compiled, registered, and stored within some official office or archive, Vismann's study seeks through various historical episodes to explain the "type of law" that emerges from a particular technology of representation, and that gives order to the flow of power via the imposition of specific ordering concepts. And not just the flow of power from and through them (as with an instrument), but the various "notions of truth," "concepts of the state," and "constructions of the subject" formed by this ordering technology whether or not it is wielded by someone else. Likewise, re-conceptualizing a period room as a technology of representation, and remaining unconcerned with its content (in this case, Shaker architecture), transforms this particular technology of representation into *that which generates a certain type of architecture*. What are the ways of inscription peculiar to the period room? What "type" of architecture do these processes produce? The period room is an historical account of an

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<sup>76</sup> Vismann, *Files*, xii.

<sup>77</sup> Vismann, *Files*, xiii.

<sup>78</sup> Vismann, *Files*, xii (emphasis added).

architectural environment that also defines certain notions of truth, particular concepts, and available subject positions.<sup>79</sup> In the case of the American Wing's period rooms, it is a history built out of American styles, traditions, and principles, and it is processed via first-hand, aesthetic experience by American citizen-visitors.<sup>80</sup>

What kind of power does a period room itself have? What is a work of architecture if not a space, not a setting or stage for life, not protection from the weather, not even a symbol of home, family, or identity? What is architecture as pure form? Taking the period rooms of the American Wing as a room-shaped "files" suggests an alternative that is more concerned with how architecture and representations participate in the terms of their evaluation and in how they structure questions for which they can offer answers. What is at stake here then is the way in which these architectural environments themselves engage in the operations of power as something other than a representation expressing some stylistic period, other than ideologically framed knowledge of America's past, and other than a Marxist critique of the mode of production through which they are constructed.

The third methodological cue offers an ideological critique of this technology derived from the Marxist-Feminist theorist, and historian of science Donna Haraway. Haraway's books and manifestos reframe the technological construction of knowledge as a political project seeking to construct ideal citizens (the "Natural Man" of Enlightenment thought), a critical insight that resonates strongly with the American Wing. This thesis, catalyzed by my reading of

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<sup>79</sup> And it is this that makes an interpretation of a given period room so challenging. How does one interpret a room without questioning its accuracy or employing its concepts? Furthermore, as these rooms ask to be interpreted, how does one avoid their interpolation without simply passing them over?

<sup>80</sup> By "experience" here I am referring first to the epigraph beginning this thesis (page 1) and the writing of Ralph Waldo Emerson. And second, as Emerson's proto-Pragmatism has been extended by John Dewey. See Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Experience," in *Nature and Other Essays*, (ed.) Larzer Ziff (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), pp.285-312; John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 2nd ed. (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court Pub. Co., 1958).

her excoriation of the taxidermy dioramas of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), is in many ways a way of working through the implications of her scholarship for the history of architecture.

Haraway asserts her essay on the AMNH dioramas is “premised on the inversion of a causal relation of technology to the social relations of domination”; which it to say that, for Haraway, these political relations “are frozen into the hardware and logics of technology.”<sup>81</sup> Her premise reverses the typical story and (similar to Vismann) argues that technology is a product (not a tool) of social domination. As such, the knowledge these technologies present as fact is itself already invested with a certain set of values regardless of how that knowledge is then employed, or (more significantly here), how it is criticized or interpreted. And so, when she calls dioramas “meaning-machines,” she is not simply suggesting that they produce meaning for the spectator, but – far more subtly – she is arguing that the kind of meaning offered up as visible (whatever story they tell) is already constrained by the parameters of the machine (for instance, taxidermy dioramas, as Haraway points out, must in part be made out of dead animals). Thus, she can argue that “Machines are time slices into the social organisms that made them. ... maps of power, [and] arrested moments of social relations.”<sup>82</sup>

When speaking about material objects like architecture it is difficult to disambiguate the (physical) material from the (conceptually ordered) object.<sup>83</sup> Period rooms are a particularly good example of this ambiguity; what first seems paradoxical (original rooms forming an un-

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<sup>81</sup> Haraway, “Teddy Bear Patriarchy,” 52.

<sup>82</sup> Haraway, “Teddy Bear Patriarchy,” 52. See also a poem written by architectural historian Dolores Hayden. For an introduction to Hayden’s scholarship see previous section above. Hayden’s work will be mentioned throughout this thesis. Dolores Hayden, “Taxidermy,” *Michigan Quarterly Review*, Vol.40, No.1 (Winter 2001): 98-100.

<sup>83</sup> This is in part because material can also be conceptual, and objects can be made of physical material. This observation not lost on either historians of science or practicing architects.

original building, for instance), soon appears matter-of-fact through the use of this technology. If Vismann's media-theoretical method of analyzing representation removes the question of meaning from the critique of representational technologies, then Haraway's inverted ideological critique of this technology transforms the straightforward Marxist question – how does it work? – into the more nuanced version: *how has it been made to work?*

Although the Shaker period room appears distant (at the very least) from architectural discourse and its disciplinary problems, such an exhibition of an esoteric American utopian community reaches into the heart of contemporary architectural discourse, remaining no less enmeshed in the stakes of the practical and historiographic making of architecture. In fact, perhaps it is in part because the Shaker room is such a seeming outlier not only in architectural discourse, but even in the American Wing itself, that this case study is able to make visible alternative lines of access into frequently obscured concepts underpinning many ideological critiques of architecture. Does architecture reflect the social conditions of its production, as Haraway argues and many others agree?<sup>84</sup> The nuances involved in the case of the American Wing's Shaker room speak to this question.

The fourth and final cue for this methodological position asks about the labor invested in each architectural object. Asking about the labor invested as a means of interpreting works of architecture brings this thesis into alignment with parts of current architectural discourse. For instance, in 2016 during the fourth international conference of the European Architectural

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<sup>84</sup> The architect's inversion of this concept has already been noted with the early work of Pugin. One might also consider Friedrich Schinkel, William Morris, and Catherine Beecher here. The historian tends to prefer the formulation of this notion that from architecture one can understand the society that surrounded and made it, or from the society that made it one can understand the true meaning of the architecture. See respectively, Katherine James-Chakraborty, "The Domestic Ideal," in *Architecture since 1400*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 290-306, and Manfredo Tafuri's well-known critique of Modern "Socialist" architecture in Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976).



History Network, Roy Kozlovsky (Tel Aviv University) and Lutz Robbers (RWTH Aachen) organized a panel titled “The ‘Work’ of Architecture: Labor Theory and the Production of Architecture.”<sup>85</sup> “After having been confined to the margins,” they write in the call for papers, “the subject of labor is returning to critical discourse, in part because of the radical transformation in the organization and experience of work brought about by globalization, de-industrialization and the information economy.” This historiographical and theoretical focus also appears in the work of Peggy Deamer and her sometimes collaborator Phillip Bernstein. In books like their 2010 edited volume *Building (in) the Future*, or in Deamer’s 2015 edited volume *The Architect as Worker* they view architecture through the lens of those who work to manifest it, and de-prioritize an account of architecture focused on its later cultural effects and interpretations.<sup>86</sup> More canonically, one might look back to Kenneth Frampton’s much-read essay “The Status of Man and the Status of his Objects: A Reading of the Human Condition” republished in 2002 as a new collected edition titled *Labour, Work and Architecture*. Frampton builds off of the work of Hannah Arendt, but stops short of her notion of the “Vita Activa” and peremptorily sets his pioneering analysis to the side in favor of more embodied accounts of experience.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Kathleen James-Chakraborty (ed.), PROCEEDINGS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY NETWORK, (University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland: UCD School of Art History and Cultural Policy, 2016), pp. 80-98.

<sup>86</sup> Peggy Deamer and Phillip Bernstein, eds. *Building (in) the Future: Recasting Labor in Architecture* (New Haven; New York: Yale School of Architecture; Princeton Architectural Press, 2010); Peggy Deamer (ed.), *The Architect as Worker: Immaterial Labor, the Creative Class, and the Politics of Design* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

<sup>87</sup> Kenneth Frampton, “The Status of Man and the Status of his Objects: A Reading of the Human Condition,” in *Labour, Work and Architecture* (London; New York: Phaidon Press, 2002); Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*. Charles R. Walgreen Foundation Lectures (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

My initial impetus behind this focus on labor derives from an essay written by Sarah Bonnemaison included in *Architecture as Experience* published in 2004.<sup>88</sup> In her framing of a public square that figured prominently in French history and was currently the site of an historical commemoration and festival of the French Revolution, Bonnemaison turned to Timothy Mitchell's critique of "commodity fetishism" in his 1991 book *Colonising Egypt*.<sup>89</sup> Bonnemaison questions whether she ought to consider the public spectacle taking place in this square as a "misrepresentation of reality" and thus a key player of the current ideological turmoil. She writes: "Mitchell constructs a mode of analysis that focuses on the mechanisms of representation. He argues that Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism has led cultural critics to denigrate spectacles as misrepresentation, while neglecting to analyze the *actual processes of representation*."<sup>90</sup> In short, to claim that power works through mis-representation leaves the actual, material act and product of representation itself unquestioned. Asking about labor, in the case of the Shaker room, then demands an account of the things, processes, and ideas that went into the production of a new period room. This differs from Marxist critiques insofar as it posits that there can be nothing inaccurate or wrong about the representation itself. Building off of the framework above, and asking about those who worked on the Shaker room and what they believed or how they practiced, rather than those who "authored" it, furthers my transformation

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<sup>88</sup> Sarah Bonnemaison, "Places and Memory: Multiple Readings of a Plaza in Paris during the Commemoration of the French Revolution," in *Architecture as Experience: Radical Change in Spatial Practices*, (ed.s) Dana Arnold and Andrew Ballantyne (London & New York: Routledge, 2004), pp.153-170.

<sup>89</sup> Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). For Marx's position see the chapter on "Commodity Fetishism" in *Capital*, Vol.1. Simply put, commodity fetishism is the almost religious devotion shown to commodities as such, which fails to acknowledge the material fact of social relations of labor that produced the object in the first place.

<sup>90</sup> Bonnemaison, "Places and Memory," 154 (emphasis added). While this shows that a focus on misrepresentation fails to analyze the representation, it also suggests a reason for why accurate representations (when viewed through the lens of commodity fetishism, for instance, folk festivals as opposed to government rallies) are deemed inherently good.

of the conversation surrounding period rooms and places them more firmly under the rubric of the architectural history I am attempting.

Bringing these four methodological cues together, hereafter I will pursue an alternative relationship between period rooms and the discipline of architecture. As an architectural historian concerned primarily with the formation of the professional architect, I am most interested in pursuing the ways in which the analysis of the “Shaker Retiring Room” challenges the link between the architect’s intentions and the work of architecture. This challenge does not just undermine the notion that the architect, designer, or curator *authors* and is therefore responsible for the period room (whether that means they get the credit or the criticism of the end product), but further and far more problematically, by acknowledging the many other actors involved, this challenge revises the conceptual parameters by which we interpret works of architecture. Setting singular authorship aside poses a significant challenge to the way in which architectural historians interpret, evaluate, and criticize works of architecture. Where some in the past may have taken Rudofsky’s “Architecture Without Architects” exhibition as emblematic of a historiographical challenge to the mythology of the architect-genius, this thesis demonstrates that the challenge posed by a period room and its diffuse authorship advances far beyond the mythology surrounding professional architects towards the means by which architecture delivers intentional effects of any kind or origin in the world.

Much of the work of this thesis has been figuring out how to sensitively interpret a room whose aesthetic presence is itself the primary product of period room technology, and one which is derived from a historiography that it contrives to propagate. If one attends solely (or primarily) to the expression of the Shaker period room, to *any* meaning it conveys, to the story the MMA tells, or to the implications of this room’s presence in the museum, then one follows a path

defined and encouraged by the period room itself. In other words, reading the room as a text effectively treats it as a communicative conduit. Such treatment ignores or obscures the relevance of the labor and the beliefs employed to produce the room for its evaluation, meaning, and value as a work of architecture.

In the Shaker room form and content are not just intertwined, they at times structurally contradict one another. If the “Shaker Retiring Room” solely represents Shaker beliefs and their devotional labor, then it also presumes one work of architecture (the period room) can represent another (the original Shaker-built room). This fact is particularly poignant in the case of the Shakers; the museum purports to reproduce the look, arrangement, and meaning of a Shaker space despite the problematic fact that it is legitimated and deemed valuable as an historical object precisely because it was the product of the Shakers. The museum’s representation is not the substitution of an image of the Shakers for Shaker work; rather, and far more significantly, it is the substitution of the one mode of production for another; the work of the Shakers is valorized, and the work of the museum is obscured.

What is it ultimately that makes the production or reproduction of architecture faithful? To what extent does a construction process (whether devotional or professional), or a method of representation (whether a period room, a photograph, or a bureaucratic document) embed or embody a particular set of beliefs? If it is indeed possible, how and in what ways are various ideas, faiths, or ideologies invested into a work of architecture?<sup>91</sup> More than an epistemological

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<sup>91</sup> Throughout this thesis I take advantage of the resonances between the concepts faith, belief, and ideology. All three are here taken to be substantially synonymous insofar as, like a belief, an ideology is neither true nor false, and not subject to the demands of external verification, only faith. For a more precise elaboration of this position see Walter Benn Michaels, *The Shape of the Signifier: 1967 to the End of History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), esp. 185-86n13. See also, Mary Poovey’s work on belief in *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998). Belief is a central theme to her analysis. For Poovey, “even behaviors that seem to be “merely” economic have always depended on mechanisms that solicited belief,” and indeed the same can be said for “any program of

critique, this question foregrounds the assumed correspondence between labor process, belief, and an architectural product.

### ***1.6. Plan of this Thesis***

Taking this “single” work of architecture as the object of analysis, this study demonstrates the significance for architectural history of interrogating period room technology. Through a close analysis of the documentation contained in the American Wing Shaker Folders (AWSF) in comparison with the historiography of Shaker architecture and research completed in the well-appointed Hancock Shaker Village Archives (HSVA), this case study enumerates and investigates the many individuals, varieties of documents and expertise, and contradictory belief systems which collaborated in the construction of the Shaker room.<sup>92</sup>

I proceed in my analysis of the Shaker room through a fairly formulaic process in each of the following chapters. Drawing from the American Wing’s internal files on the Shaker room, I first select and describe a central document that played a significant role in the production of the “Shaker Retiring Room.” Each document selected for discussion demonstrates a network of influences, technologies, expertise, and contingencies running between the Shakers of Mount Lebanon, NY, and the American Wing and their many agents in the 1970s. I then place each document into the narrative context from which it was produced and utilized, its social organism, to use Haraway’s phrase. Who made this document? How? To what end? Within this context, I attempt to expose the basic claims that each document makes regarding the Shaker room, and in

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systematic knowledge.” As, for instance, can be seen (simply put) in the terms “credit, credibility, credentials, and credulity.” (27).

<sup>92</sup> For a history of Hancock Shaker Village and its relationship to Mount Lebanon see Deborah E. Burns, *Shaker Cities of Peace, Love and Union: A History of the Hancock Bishopric* (Hanover; London: University Press of New England & Hancock Shaker Village, Inc., 1993).

particular I seek to draw out the questions that each document evokes. After which, I delve into the archival and historiographic context on which these claims rest; I do this less to prove each claim right or wrong, and more to divulge what is emphasized or obscured in the eventual claims made by the document in question. Finally, informed by the historical and conceptual parameters just discovered, I return to the Shaker room and reconsider the earlier analysis of that document. Each of these documents opens up greater nuances which often contradict the broader story at various points; each deploys the sometimes absurd, but always revealing, depths to which one can extend a line of analysis. Thus, each exemplary document produces different Shaker Retiring Rooms.

Chapter two analyzes a black and white archival photograph commissioned by the American Wing in 1981. Following this archival representation closely leads to the documentation and historiography of the Shakers in the 1930s and 40s. There the products of Shaker craftsmanship appear simple and austere in order to undergird an overt early twentieth-century American nationalism, and to emphasize America's developmental independence from and pragmatic superiority to European Modernism. On the other hand, in the 1980s this photograph also culminates a building process with an ideal marketing image, tying the American Wing's longtime commitment to idealized American historiography into 1970s discourse and its publics.

Chapter three interrogates a list hastily written by the hand of Morrison H. Heckscher, Curator of American Domestic Arts at the American Wing. Never intended for publication, this list itemizes the various pieces of the North Family Dwelling purchased, dismantled, and transported to New York City. It is also one of the only architectural representations of the Shaker room made in the service of the intended period room before the original room was

dismantled. Heckscher's list performs an exemplary role in the production of the Shaker room that remains wholly unconcerned with what the room eventually looks like. I will show that this seemingly banal list insists one take account of labor in the production of a work of architecture, and in so doing, it also posits an under-acknowledged form of documentation for architectural historical analysis.

For the conclusion, I will return to the title of the thesis to consider what an *Unfaithful Architecture* might have to offer the discipline of architecture in general, and the architectural historian in particular. Following the careful analysis of the Shaker period room, this last consideration seeks to extend the discussion towards future research by restating and re-solidifying the central question and thesis. Through this process I hope to demonstrate that the American Wing's "Shaker Retiring Room" is an architectural object which within the parameters of its technological system renders coherent numerous and contradictory historical accounts, personal beliefs, and modes of production. I argue that the "Shaker Retiring Room" is the product of a plural authorship immanent to the relationship between author and product, and as such is a collection of overlapping and simultaneous Shaker Retiring Rooms.

## 2. REPRODUCING A SHAKER ROOM

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“The relationship between a way of life and a way of work invests the present study with special interest.”<sup>1</sup>

### ***2.1. Right There in Black & White***

In 1981 the American Wing commissioned an architectural photographer to document their newly completed “Shaker Retiring Room” with an archival black and white photograph (Figure 2.1).<sup>2</sup> The size of the room and organization of the objects within it necessitated the use of a wide angle lens causing distortion in the lower left corner of the image similar to that you might expect from the margins of a two-point perspective. The photographer must have squeezed his person (or a tripod) flat against the wall to get the shot. Positioned as it was, the camera recorded an arrangement of Shaker artefacts within the room in a way that presented nearly every item against a light background paying homage to their subtle curves. Much in the same way that the gallery’s placard maps out and indexes the various works of art in a black and white line drawing, this document makes it clear where the art is and where it is not (Figure 2.2). Thus accentuated, this depiction of the room offers what many since the mid-nineteenth century have considered a stark (or “grim”) aesthetic.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Deming Andrews, and Faith Andrews, *Shaker Furniture: The Craftsmanship of an American Communal Sect*, (photographs by) William F. Winter (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1964), p.3.

<sup>2</sup> Black & White photography was the archival standard at the MMA in 1981. Additive color screens introduced color photography in the late nineteenth century. Color films such as Kodachrome appeared as early as 1935. However, color photography only reached relative legitimacy and acceptance c.1950. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) put on their first show of all color photography titled “Color Photography Exhibition” between May 10 and June 25 of 1950. Whereas, their first solo exhibition featured color photographs by William Eggleston in 1976. Today, faith in color photography as an archival medium is not pervasive. The ultimate point being: Cheek’s black and white photograph, while perhaps inherently nostalgic to eyes today, was typical practice c.1981.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Dickens, to give one instance, famously visited the North Family of Mount Lebanon, NY (which he described as a “gloomy silent commonwealth”) in June of 1842. He explained in repetitive diction: “we walked into



This archival document convincingly echoes the documentary photographs of Shaker architecture and furniture taken on behalf of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). Inaugurated as part of the Works Progress Administration, the HABS program seeks to protect American architectural heritage through the survey, documentation, and archiving of historic American structures for later study and analysis.<sup>4</sup> Between the 1920s and 1931, William F. Winter visited Shaker communities on behalf of HABS to document significant examples of Shaker architecture in black & white photographs. Winter remains today the most well-known documentary photographer of Shaker artefacts due (in large part) to his professional relationship with prominent Shaker historians of the time.<sup>5</sup> Winter's images emphasize soft light, high contrast, and carefully positioned furniture within interior spaces otherwise free of encumbrances or other signs of daily life which might place these images in the twentieth century. It seems as if the floor holds up the furniture as unobtrusively as possible, while the walls recede into the

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a grim room, where several grim hats were hanging on grim pegs, and the time was grimly told by a grim clock which uttered every tick with a kind of struggle, as if it broke the grim silence reluctantly, and under protest. Ranged against the wall were six or eight stiff high-backed chairs, and they partook so strongly of the general grimness that one would much rather have sat on the floor than incurred the smallest obligation to any of them." This quote appears frequently as an enjoyable anecdote to illustrate that Shaker design was decidedly restrained to the eyes of their contemporaries. The anecdote is further employed to imply that this bleak aesthetic had not yet reached popular appeal (in the United State or in England) until after the Shakers had been living with it for years. Incidentally, confronting another example of "Modern" aesthetic sensibilities in 1851, Dickens responded to the "Crystal Palace" exposition saying it was "too much" this time, as opposed to the Shaker's too little – mindless amazement versus mindful boredom and austerity.

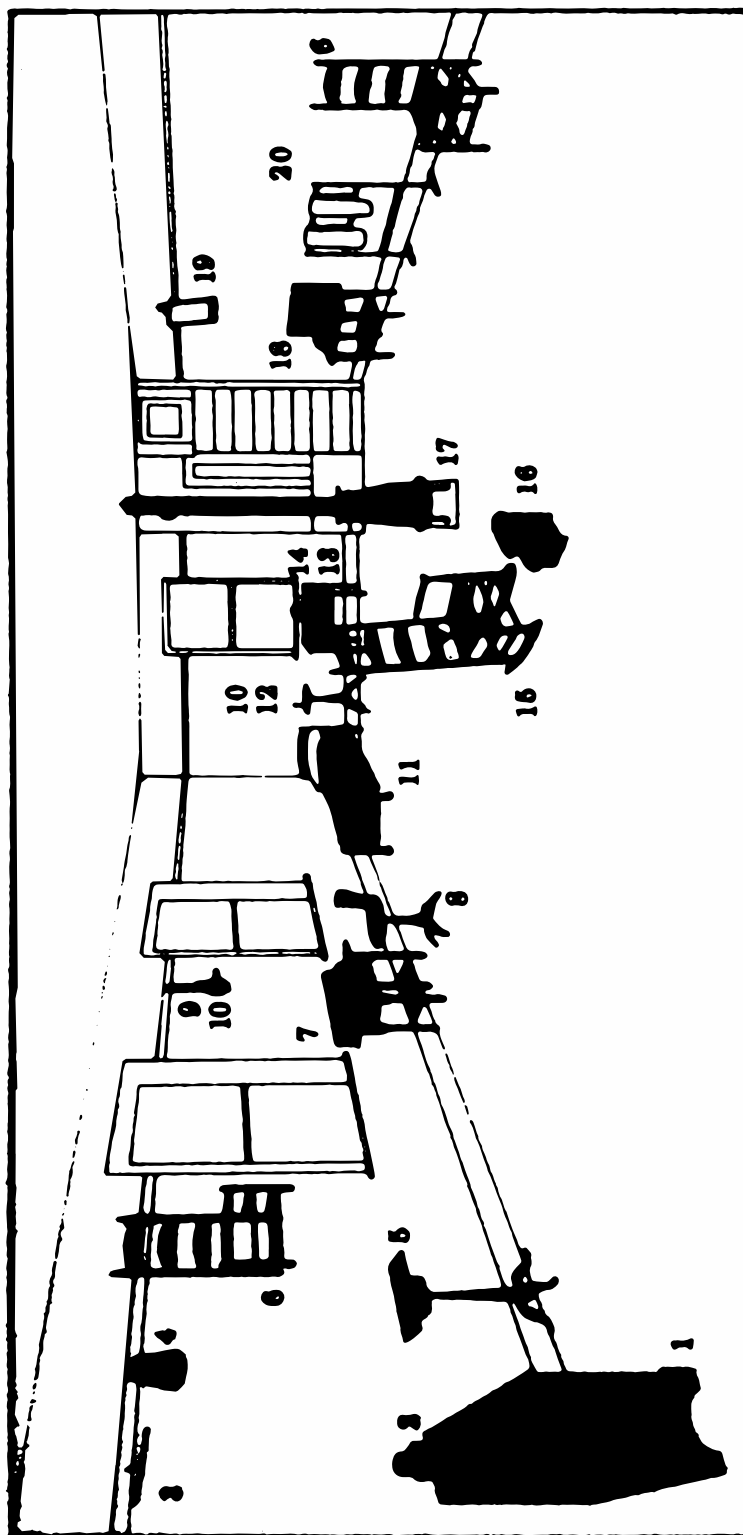
<sup>4</sup> For instance, for Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation on the North Family Dwelling (NFD) in Mount Lebanon from which the American Wing period room was in part taken, see HABS, Creator, Mother Ann Lee, and James Whittaker, Baldwin, N E, photographer. *Shaker North Family, Dwelling House, Shaker Road, New Lebanon, Columbia County, NY*. Documentation Compiled After, 1933. Pdf. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ny0110/>. (Accessed August 18, 2016). Survey No.: HABS NY-3249; Call #: HABS NY,11-NELEB.V,24-. 21 black & white photographs (3) by William F. Winter in 1920s-1931, (15) by N.E. Baldwin in June 1938-December 1939, (2) by Unknown. 11 survey drawings by A.K. Mosley (Troy, NY) in 1939-40.

<sup>5</sup> The infamy of both Winter and the Shaker historians (Edward Deming Andrews and Faith Andrews) he worked with will be discussed below. At this juncture, what is important to note is Winter's institutional authorization (and funding), on the one hand, and his connection with prominent Shaker collectors and historians, which would have provided him with greater access to Shaker sites, in turn bolstering his (and their) professional legitimacy through their mutual success and affiliation with the WPA, on the other.

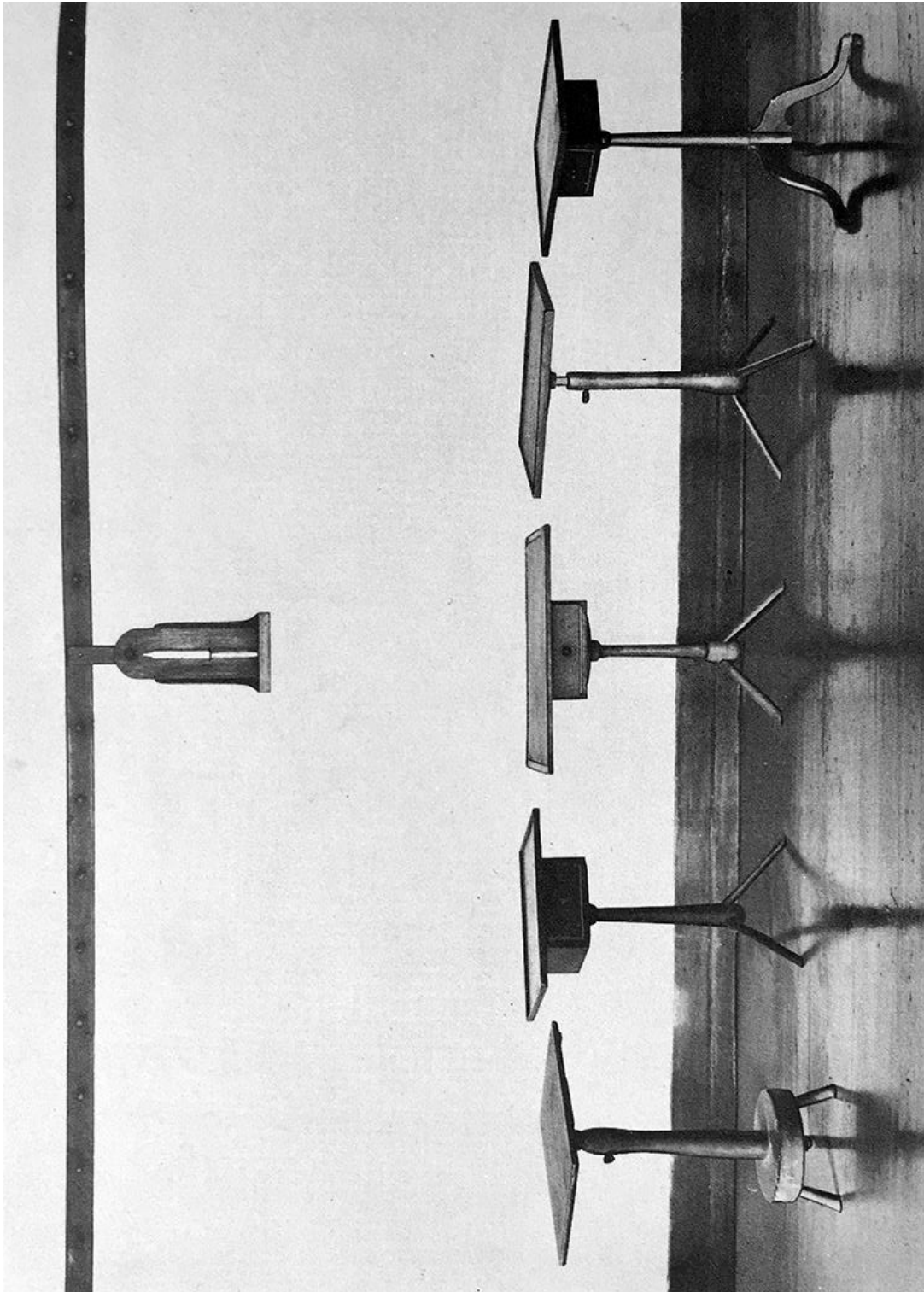
**Figure 2.1.** Richard Cheek, “Shaker Retiring Room” (Accession Number 1972.187.1-3), New Lebanon, New York, c. 1830-40, American Wing, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, 1972. Archival Black & White Photograph. AWSF. Courtesy of Richard Cheek, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Emily C. Chadbourne Fund. (Appendix B: Folder A:8)



**Figure 2.2.** Photo by author, Index Drawing of “Shaker Retiring Room,” American Wing, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, c.1981, photograph of black line drawing displayed on period room placard.



**Figure 2.3.** William F. Winter, “Early Shaker Stands,” Mount Lebanon, NY (Andrews and Andrews, *Shaker Furniture*, 1937, Plate 12), photograph of a five Shaker candle stands in historical progression from right to left and arranged neatly in an arc against a blank plaster wall.



background (Figure 2.3). This image is far from impromptu, it shows the intentional work of a skilled documentary photographer.<sup>6</sup>

A comparison between Winter's 1931 photographs and Cheek's archival image from 1981 indicates many similarities, but also notable differences. The most pertinent difference among them, however, underlines their resonance: where Winter photographs a collection of objects (in this case, a series of similar candle stands), Cheek (officially) documents a single, aggregate object. Despite this difference, as the description above indicates, Cheek presents this single object as a collection of parts. Ultimately, whether similar or different regarding their visual focus, the most salient point to acknowledge concerns the very capacity to compare the two, and the seeming relevance of such a comparison. While a complete correspondence between a 1981 and a 1931 archival document would seem to demonstrate the accuracy of the American Wing's reconstructed retiring room insofar as the similarity of the photographs would also indicate the similarity of the building interiors. The more important aspect to note, however, is the perception that a room once lived in by Shakers, and a gallery space in Manhattan which you or anyone else might visit *could* be similar. Before engaging the historiographical debate inspired by Winter's documentary vision, the process and material results of both Cheek's and Winter's documentation addresses the implications of this presumed correspondence.

It was not until 1933 that HABS began to codify the documentation procedures of historic buildings and structural remains.<sup>7</sup> Despite following Winter's documentation by four or

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<sup>6</sup> Figure 2.3 was republished in Andrews and Andrews, *Shaker Furniture* (1964) as Plate 12. In their introductory description of the plates, the Andrewses write a footnote on the preparation of these photographs: "The authors wish to acknowledge their indebtedness to Mr. William F. Winter, of Schenectady, New York, whose skill as a photographer, high artistic standards and understanding of the Shaker theme itself were invaluable aids to truthful interpretation" (65).

<sup>7</sup> See National Headquarters of the Survey, *Specifications for the Measurement and Recording of Historic American Buildings and Structural Remains*, based upon instructions issued December 1933 to May 1934, first printed July 1, 1934, revised and edited (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Branch of Plans and

five years, the sentiment inspiring this next quote would have altered little during that time. The HABS documentation guidelines of 1935 disclose the program's overall intentions for the documentation of American architectural heritage under the heading, "The Need for Recording Historic Buildings." They declare:

It is the purpose of the Historic American Buildings survey to study, measure, and draw up the plans, elevations and details of the important antique buildings of the United States. Our architectural heritage of buildings from the last four centuries diminishes at an alarming rate. The ravages of fire and the natural elements, together with the demolition and alterations caused by real estate "improvements", form *an inexorable tide of destruction destined to wipe out the great majority of the buildings which knew the beginning and first flourish of the nation*. The comparatively few structures which can be saved by extraordinary effort and presented as exhibition houses and museums or altered and used for residences or minor commercial uses comprise only a minor percentage of the interesting and important architectural specimens which remain *from the old days*. It is the responsibility of the American people that if the great number of our antique buildings must disappear through economic causes, they should not pass into unrecorded oblivion."<sup>8</sup>

Such claims and the operational responses it inspired resonate strongly with the American Wing's founding intentions as delivered in their *Opening Addresses* in 1924.<sup>9</sup> This further correspondence between HABS documentation practices (photographs, drawings, and textual descriptions) and those of the American Wing (period rooms) in terms of institutional missions

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Design, Historic American Buildings Survey, November 1, 1935), 50 pages. (Hereafter referred to as: *HABS Specifications* 1935). The release of these guidelines corresponds with the Historic Sites Act of 1935, P.L. 74-292 (49 Stat. 666), which "formally recognized the need for such records by authorizing the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior to conduct surveys; to secure and preserve drawings, plans, photographs, and other data relating to historic buildings; to enter into cooperative agreements; and to develop an educational program concerning historic buildings." Harley J. McKee (Compiler), *Recording Historic Buildings: The Historic American Buildings Survey*, (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1970.), p.v.

<sup>8</sup> It is worth noting that "the beginning and first flourish of the nation" and the "old days" referenced here officially concluded (according to HABS) in 1860. *HABS Specifications*, 1. (emphasis added)

<sup>9</sup> See above section 1.1.

helps explain the trust the American Wing has placed in HABS documents and personnel.<sup>10</sup> In Part IV of *HABS Specifications* concerning Photographic Field Work and under the heading “Purpose,” these same guidelines dictated that photographic “views should be selected for their architectural, rather than their pictorial value. Clearness of detail and truthfulness of record are most important.”<sup>11</sup> It would seem that Winter’s documentation was both clear and true enough for HABS; his photographs were endorsed by the HABS District Officer, and retained by Library of Congress. Thus, Winter’s photographs of Shaker artefacts have been fully authorized in the name of the American people, and stand as the official “record” of that heritage “from the old days.”

A label attached to the back of the 8.5”x11” archival document recording the “Shaker Retiring Room” provides the period room’s full citation information: museum accession number, name, location, and date, as well as the fund responsible for the purchase of this work of art (Figure 2.4). But, regarding the photograph itself, this citation offers only the name of the photographer: Richard Cheek.<sup>12</sup> Why is the authorship of this official, evidentiary document relevant, particularly given that no other information about the photograph itself appears there? What is gained or proven by the American Wing in choosing to give credit through this citation to the Shakers (in the title), the Chadburn Fund (via funding), *and* Richard Cheek? Who is the audience of such an annotation, and what is this proving to them?

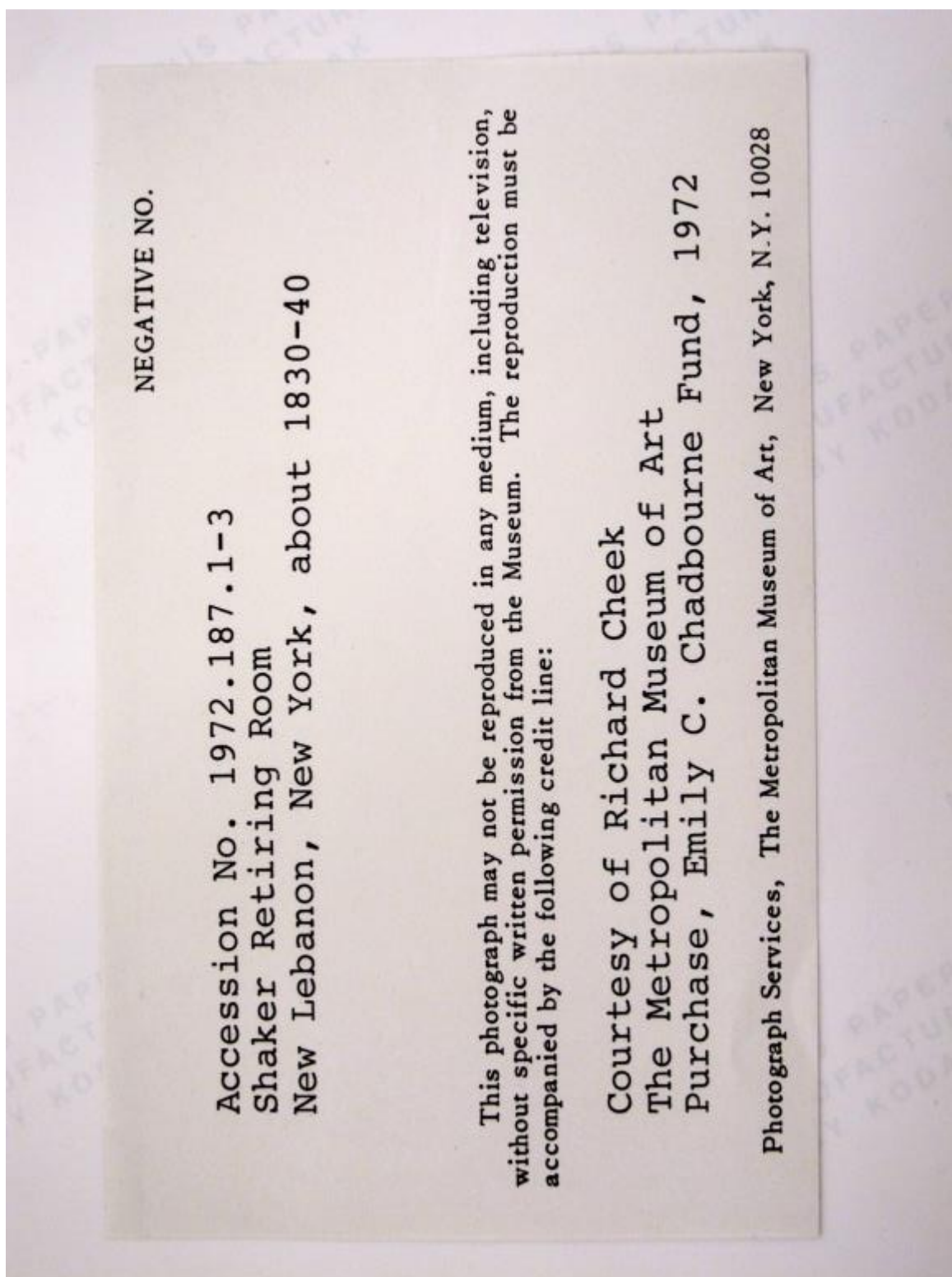
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<sup>10</sup> Mary Poovey might go so far as to call this trust a kind of faith. See Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> *HABS Specifications*, 14. (emphasis added)

<sup>12</sup> The citation does not offer, in other words, the film type, focal length, aperture, time, date, location, or any other information (archival or otherwise) about the photograph itself. The citation posits Cheek’s photograph as transparent and, at the very least, unimportant to the significance of the “Shaker Retiring Room.”

**Figure 2.4.** American Wing, Label on back of Richard Cheek Photograph (Figure 2.1), American Wing, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, c.1981. AWSF. (See Appendix B: A:8)





**Figure 2.5.** Richard Cheek, Lynchburg, VA (Allen, *Lynchburg, an Architectural History*, 1981), black and white photograph of house interior.



It should not be surprising then to discover that architectural photographer Richard Cheek, like Winter before him, also worked as a HABS photographer. That the official black and white document insists on the correct attribution of its photographic services, in other words, might be related to Cheek's reputation as a photographer who documents sites of American architectural heritage.<sup>13</sup> For instance, Cheek's photographs of Lynchburg, Virginia appear similar to those taken of the Shaker room. If taken out of context, the photographs of Lynchburg building interiors might well be mistaken for documentation of buildings no longer in existence, or a selection of period rooms reconstructed from historic Virginia buildings (Figure 2.5).

Following the documentary techniques and methods promoted by HABS would lend legitimacy to Cheek's photograph of the American Wing's Shaker room. And yet, if we follow Cheek's comments in his 1990 essay "History in the Service of Design" coauthored with Keith Morgan, the intentions behind the documentation of architecture holds an ambiguous position between practice and history.<sup>14</sup> "In essence, "Cheek and Morgan argue, "the writing of architectural history in America was generated by the professional needs of the architect." They continue:

It was the architect who determined what specific periods and styles of architecture were to be studied. It was the architect who decided which aspects or details of historic buildings were to be recorded, and it was he who did the sketching, measuring, and drawing that established the conventions of representation in the history books. As a consequence, it was the words and images of the architect-historians, not the writings of the amateur or academic

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<sup>13</sup> Along with working for HABS documenting American architectural heritage, Richard Cheek has published photographs in at least eleven monographs between 1975 and 2013 concerned with the history of American architecture. See, for instance, S. Allen Chambers, *Lynchburg, an Architectural History* (Charlottesville: Published for the Sarah Winston Henry Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities by the University Press of Virginia, 1981); and Richard Cheek, *Selling the Dwelling: The Books That Built America's Houses, 1775-2000* (New York: Grolier Club, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Richard Cheek and Keith N. Morgan, "History in the Service of Design: American Architect-Historians, 1870-1940," *Studies in the History of Art*, Vol.35 (1990): 61-75.

historians that influenced the course of contemporary design and criticism from the 1870s until the outbreak of WWII.<sup>15</sup>

For Cheek and Morgan, documentation completed by architects and not the written architectural history of non-architects guides the future production of architecture. Documentation, in other words, directs design. The American Wing seems to be in agreement with Cheek and Morgan given that, if we are to follow this archival document carefully, Richard Cheek is definitely one part of the story of the Shaker room that the American Wing would like us to know about; his training, profession, and reputation are significant. This attribution of authorship lends the “Shaker Retiring Room” authority through its proper “historical” documentation, and in so doing underpins its evidentiary status.

As far as the American Wing’s citation information is concerned this official photograph is the archival version of the Shaker period room. To the American Wing (and the demands of practicality), Cheek’s photograph is transparent, a neutral window onto the room they had just finished building.<sup>16</sup> By focusing attention on the image’s evidentiary status, this official attribution of the art object obscures all of the research, logistical contingencies, construction labor, and institutional orchestration invested in the room over the years culminating with this photograph – almost as if the photograph was the goal the curators had in mind from the very beginning. The American Wing hired Cheek to document the Shaker room precisely as he had documented historic architecture elsewhere. Which is to say, they did not hire him to make something modern look historical, but rather to demonstrate that a modern room stands as something out of the past once stood. There is nothing conspiratorial in the American Wing’s

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<sup>15</sup> Cheek and Morgan, “History in the Service of Design,” 61.

<sup>16</sup> A theoretical point of which museum professionals are surely well aware. My intent is not to criticize museum or documentation practices. If such documents produce a bias in the historiography of architecture (and I believe they do), then it is not a matter of fault or even of ceasing to produce these documents; rather, the point is to acknowledge that bias and work with it.

actions with this photograph; rather, the use of and trust in HABS photographers and other archival documentation practices and standards stem from a straightforward belief in their clarity and worthwhile usefulness.

Nevertheless, whether or not the American Wing sought to project the Shaker room back into the past through some sleight of hand or not, that is precisely what appears to have happened. Two caveats about architectural photography are worth considering here:

First, architectural historian Iain Borden presents the danger of this faith in architectural photography as a clear cut documentary method. “The architecture depicted becomes a building ‘back then’,” Borden writes, “back in the past and so somehow removed from the world today.”<sup>17</sup> The very comparison of historic and contemporary photograph propels the Shaker room back in time. By extending the subject of the photograph back into the past, the photograph of the Shaker room appears to become more accurate.

Second, architectural historian Claire Zimmerman acknowledges numerous moments in which photographs of the early twentieth century appear as informational documents. Despite claims to photography’s indexicality, Zimmerman explains that black and white photographs are poor “conduits of architectural information” because in the process of inscribing the extant light in an interior room they also distort the values and tones it reveals by fixing qualities, which in personal experience remain in flux (think of the distortion at the margins of Figure 1.1).<sup>18</sup> Thus,

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<sup>17</sup> Iain Borden, “Imaging Architecture: The Uses of Photography in the Practice of Architectural History,” *The Journal of Architecture* 12, no. 1 (February 2007): 67.

<sup>18</sup> Claire Zimmerman, “Photographic Modern Architecture: Inside ‘the New Deep,’” *The Journal of Architecture* 9, no. 3 (September 2004): 331–54, 332. “The disconnection between the documentary value of the photograph and its other roles,” Zimmerman writes, “has often been explored in other photographic genres.” She cites Rosalind Krauss’s essay “The Originality of the Avant-Garde and other Modernist Myths” from 1985 to reference “Photography’s Discursive Spaces.” See also *Photographic Architecture in the Twentieth Century* (Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 2014). On the rhetoric of the documentary image linked with modernist aesthetics see Wendy A. Grossman, “From Ethnographic Object to Modernist Icon: Photographs of African and Oceanic Sculpture and the Rhetoric of the Image,” *Visual Resources* 23, no. 4 (December 2007): 291–336. For a response to

when Cheek's photograph looks like an historical photograph, it designates a correspondence to this distortion, and not to any implicit index of architectural information accurately replicated. These two caveats introduce two significant technological parameters by which black and white photographs work, and through which they mis-represent architectural experience. And so, I contend that it is less important to ask about accuracy, and more important to wonder why they are being compared in the first place. What is gained by such a comparison? What does this correspondence validate, justify, or authorize? Ultimately the comparison of a historical photograph with the photograph of a contemporary room posits evidentiary value in visual correspondence. An action that increases the evidentiary value of both documents, and thus increases the value of the Shaker room itself.

Whether or not the "Shaker Retiring Room" *is* actually a historical artefact – and both the American Wing and Cheek most likely believe it is – remains beside the point here. Because Cheek's act of documentation is deemed transparent, the archival photograph is not thought to *intend* or alter its subject. It claims, that is, that the room *in fact* looks this way; not as a product of authorial intention, but as a product of technological inevitability – as if to say, that is just how cameras work. That all photographs taken of Shaker architecture with the same techniques and methods will have the same general appearance may seem once again like verification, but it also structurally mandates a level playing field on which each photograph delivers fundamentally equal content. That is to say, the equivalence is built-in, not discovered. Thus, the apparent correspondence between an archival photograph of 1981 and a documentary photograph of the

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the modernizing myth disseminated by photography see Kim Beil, "The Myth of Black and White Modernism: Color Photographs and the Politics of Retrojective Looking," *Visual Resources* 31, no. 3–4 (October 2, 2015): 127–53. And to take the next step, Mary N. Woods suggests exciting possibilities for thinking with photographs about the built environment beyond fixed narratives expanding beyond the scripted spaces of museum environments or their archives that are the focus of this thesis. See Mary N. Woods, *Beyond the Architect's Eye: Photographs and the American Built Environment*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

1930s, while it may seem a confirmation of accuracy, in fact calls into question the relationship between the American Wing's Shaker period room, and what precisely it is attempting to represent. If this period room is made to look like a Winter photograph, then what is it documenting? Perhaps Cheek's photograph presents us with a Shaker room that represents photographic documentation from the 1930s: build a room, and you get a photograph.

## 2.2. "The Shakers" of the early twentieth century

"The Shakers" are not same thing as the Shakers. References to "the Shakers" in the last hundred years rarely acknowledge the radical Protestantism and social policies central to Shaker belief.<sup>19</sup> As Stephen J. Stein wrote, in his 1992 book *The Shaker Experience in America*, "the current popularity of the society's artifacts has over shadowed the fact that the Shakers chose to call themselves the United Society of Believers, not the United Society of Furniture Makers."<sup>20</sup> Or as Shaker Sister Mildred Barker commented in the 1980s during the construction of the Shaker room, "I almost expect to be remembered as a chair or a table." It was precisely the Shaker's social and political positions that brought Shakerism to the height of its fame prior to the Civil War, and which drew famous personalities like Charles Dickens, Ralph Waldo

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<sup>19</sup> Although calling Protestantism *radical* tends to have an odd ring to it in the United States, a quick look to Europe's Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) will remedy any doubts. Protestantism's emphasis on un-mediated, individual salvation through faith alone was decidedly political up through the nineteenth century. For the most canonical and emblematic example of the political turmoil (from the most philosophical down to debates concerning municipal governance) embroiled in the belief that all individuals have access to God internally refer to "the Antinomian Crisis" and the trial of Anne Hutchinson in 1637. See David S. Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World: Heresy to Revolution* (Harvard University Press, 1985). Such spiritual individualism fundamental to Shakerism played out the implicit conflict between the central Shaker ministry at Mount Lebanon, during the mid to late nineteenth century, and individual prophets claiming divine inspiration (as Hutchinson had).

<sup>20</sup> Stephen J. Stein, *The Shaker Experience in America: A History of the United Society of Believers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p.xiii. For an excellent account of the Shaker's distinct mixture of charisma and authority, what Janet Sarbanes calls "charismatic communalism," see Janet Sarbanes, "The Shaker 'Gift' Economy: Charisma, Aesthetic Practice and Utopian Communalism," *Utopian Studies* 20, no. 1 (March 2009): 121–39.

Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and more to visit these communities personally. However, with their more socially and politically radical ideas of previous infamy fading into the background during the early twentieth century, the Shakers were quickly becoming synonymous with the so-called Shaker style or Shaker aesthetic.<sup>21</sup> Referring to “the Shakers” came to indicate the popular appeal of Shaker furniture and its simple, utilitarian design aesthetic.

This transformation of a community of believers into an identifiable set of collector’s items began with the documentation of Shaker communities in the 1920s and 30s.<sup>22</sup> At this moment in history, due in large part to government funding from the WPA and a resurgent American Nationalism and isolationism following WWI, the United Society of Believers experienced a resurgence of positive attention from non-believers. The Shakers had excited American passions since their inception in the late eighteenth century evoking praise and fear, and leading to almost constant legal dispute in response to their atypical behaviors.<sup>23</sup> And yet, according to material culture historian William D. Moore in his aptly titled essay “You’d Swear They Were Modern,” this period of historiographical revision witnessed the transformation of what was “a constricting religious sect” into “the canon of American Art.”<sup>24</sup> What had been a

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<sup>21</sup> For instance, their health-conscious agrarian life, stringent Populism, capitalist success, religious-communist ideals, complete lack of private property, legal equality of all sexes and races.

<sup>22</sup> Here in particular it is worth noting Bowe and Richmond, *Selling Shaker* for the comprehensive way in which the authors show the historiographic legacy of the early twentieth century, and in particular, the close relationship between Shaker artefacts and museum practice from then forward. Simply put, the early twentieth-century documentation of the Shakers helped spawn a multi-million-dollar culture industry.

<sup>23</sup> See, for instance, Polly Jane Good, “Shakers, Religion, and Citizenship in the Early American Republic,” (Ph.D., University of Oregon, 2009). The Shakers have elicited strong responses from the non-Shaker American public since the eighteenth century, beginning with their refusal to raise arms (as Pacifists) during the Revolutionary War, for which the New York State legislature tried numerous Believers for Treason. For a particularly telling example of this transformation in popular imagination see the differences between the numerous court cases in which Shaker communities are named as defendants. See Shakers, *Memorial of the Society of People of New-Lebanon, in the County of Columbia, and Watervliet, in the County of Albany, Commonly Called Shakers to the Respectable Legislature of the State of New-York* (Albany [N.Y.]: Churchill & Abbey, 1816).

<sup>24</sup> William D. Moore, “‘You’d Swear They Were Modern’: Ruth Reeves, the Index of American Design, and the Canonization of Shaker Material Culture,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 47, no. 1 (March 2013): 33.

powerful, if eccentric curiosity first popularized during America's Second Great Awakening, became a well-marked stop in the development of a specifically American craft community.

Three primary interventions in the historiography of the Shakers effected this shift: two distinct programs within the WPA, HABS and the *Index for American Design*, and also the collective work of Edward Deming Andrews and Faith Andrews as advocates, collectors, and scholars. Most significantly, it should be acknowledged, that none of the accounts of Shaker communities from these sources refer to the Shakers of the 1920s-30s, but rather always to a reconstructed understanding of "the Shakers" c.1840.<sup>25</sup> The WPA inaugurated this process in part by the intent to record and disseminate examples of early American craftsmanship deemed significant and potentially inspirational for the next generation's industrial craftsmen. According to a 1939 issue of *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, the projects of the WPA "have nurtured a distinctly American type of culture as over against imported cultures which reflect "alien-isms". And furthermore, "That America has a vigorous native culture of a high order, which when properly nourished bursts forth into flower, has been amply demonstrated during the past four years."<sup>26</sup> Two of these cultural documentation projects focused in on American Shaker communities.

HABS drawings and photographs, as discussed above, remain something of a gold standard for the accurate depiction of Shaker architecture. "It is intended that the survey shall cover construction of all types," according to their 1935 guidelines. The comprehensive

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<sup>25</sup> However, HABS documents do provide something of an anomaly to this claim insofar as the drawings and photographs depict the buildings as they appear at the time of documentation. This is particularly true of the later HABS photographs. Nevertheless, HABS drawings show their subjects in a state of full-repair, idealized to a moment immediately following the completion of their construction: floor boards are not broken, wall plaster is unmarred, modern additions are absent, and so forth. Further, as mentioned above, photographs were arranged in many (though not all) instances to exclude any un-Shaker aspects.

<sup>26</sup> Cedric Larson, "The Cultural Projects of the WPA," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol.3, Iss.3 (July 1939): 491-496.



collection of “buildings of every description” were documented in full drafted detail “so that a complete picture of the culture of the time as reflected in the buildings of the period may be put on record.”<sup>27</sup> Organized in part by the American Institute of Architects, HABS drawings developed in line with professional architectural standards. The emphasis on plan, section, and detail drawings were insisted upon and employed so that each of these structures might be rebuilt in the future: “Record drawings should be complete, clear, accurate, and in sufficient detail to serve as a basis for the reconstruction of the building if it be destroyed.”<sup>28</sup> And this constitutes the primary medium through which Shaker architecture can be analyzed today, serving as both freely available research material accessible through the Library of Congress, and images for publication unrestricted by copyright.

While these drawings may have little to say about the Shaker aesthetic on the surface, they fully translate the embodied experience of Shaker architecture into a series of replicable pieces, processes, and actions. Perhaps this is the purpose of the architectural drawing (or at least the preservationist’s documentary drawing). Nevertheless, as a primary document referred to in the interpretation of Shaker architecture today, they direct a researcher’s attention in far different ways than might be expected from a community who referred to their architecture as a “living building.” A case in point might be the Shaker folders at the American Wing. These files retain copies of 6 of the 11 HABS drawings portraying the North Family Dwelling house from which the Shaker room emerged.<sup>29</sup> They were no doubt instrumental in confirming or even providing detailed information on the positioning and detailing of the retiring room (Figure 2.6). However,

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<sup>27</sup> *HABS guidelines*, 3.

<sup>28</sup> *HABS guidelines*, 17.

<sup>29</sup> AWSF, folder 1, section 1.2, documents 1-6. Consisting of drawings 4,5,6,7,8, and 11 of 11 total drawings in HABS set. (1939-1940). See Appendix C.

their presence (in many duplicate copies scattered through the files) does raise a question: why were there no drawings of this dwelling house (or any other building) produced by Shaker draughtsman or artists present in the files? Many such drawings certainly exist, but none seem to be relevant in the reconstruction of Shaker architecture (Figure 2.7). It is thus important to acknowledge that, whether intended or merely a result of standard processes, Shaker drawings expose the specific type of vision employed by HABS professionals.

The *Index for American Design* (1935-1942) was another WPA program focused on the documentation of American heritage. The *Index*, however, documented products of American domestic and industrial art and design, rather than architecture (as it was already documented by HABS) with the aim of promoting a native American style. In the 1930s Constance Rourke explains the intention of the *Index* as a response to the question: “What is American Design? or Have we an American Design?”<sup>30</sup> As early as 1936, Ruth Reeves, the organizer of the *Index* in New York State, was instructed by her superiors in the Federal program to begin preparing the first portfolio of the *Index* for publication in six months: the Shakers seemed to everyone involved to be a convenient and obvious place to begin. The popularity of this folio of documentary images would help solidify the *Index*’s funding and intentions for future work.<sup>31</sup>

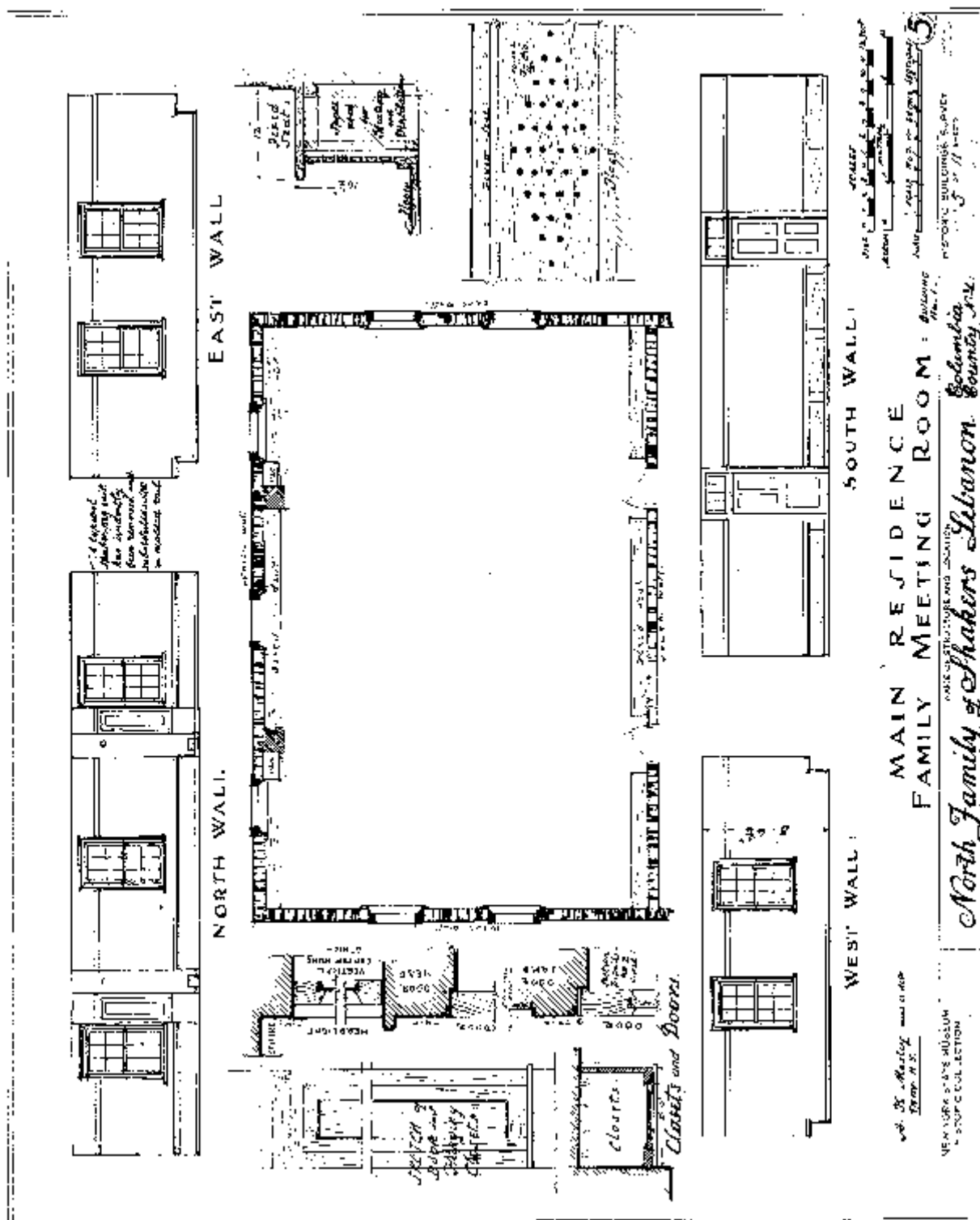
Drawings like those produced by the *Index* resonate graphically with the documentation of the Shaker room. Similar to Cheek’s photograph, furniture appears isolated against a light background, each item is individuated as a uniquely accessioned work of art considered as an aesthetic object outside of the context and history of Shakerism. While great attention is paid to

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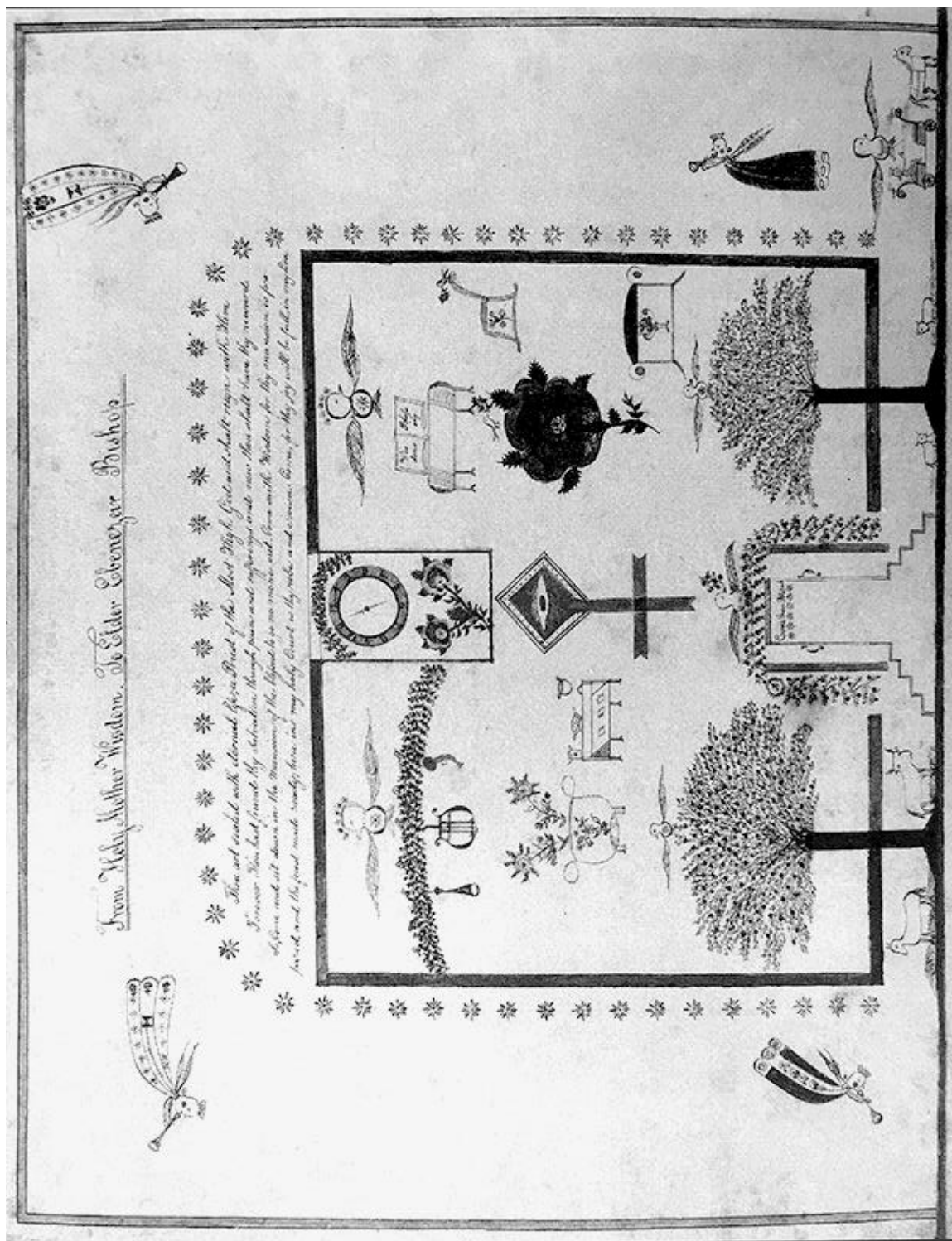
<sup>30</sup> Constance Rourke, “What is American Design,” in O’Conner, F.V. (ed.), *Art for the Millions – Essays from the 1930s by Artists and Administrators of the WPA Federal Art Project* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society Ltd., 1973), 165.

<sup>31</sup> For a comprehensive and careful analysis of the organization, internal politics, and ultimate role of the *Index* in the popular perception of the Shakers see especially Moore, “You’d Swear They Were Modern.”

**Figure 2.6.** A.K. Mosley, "Main Residence: Family Meeting Room," North Family Dwelling, Mount Lebanon, NY, HABS survey drawing (# 5 of 11), 1939-40.



**Figure 2.7.** Author Unknown, "From Holy Mother Wisdom to Elder Ebenezer Bishop," watercolor and ink on paper, 113/8"x14 1/2", Philadelphia Museum of Art (Promey, *Spiritual Spectacles*, Fig.29, p.204). Shaker gift drawing of Meetinghouse in a combined plan and elevation filled with spiritual visions.



formal characteristics like asymmetry, fluid detailing, and overall proportion, no mention is made (unsurprisingly) of economics, spiritualism, or intentions beyond ergonomic appropriateness. As opposed to Cheek's photograph, the *Index* documents also remove their objects from social and environmental context. Other photographic documentation of the Shaker room found in the Shaker Folders seems to carry forward this shift (Figure 2.8.). Karen Willis, a staff photographer at the American Wing, took four black and white photographs for a book on period rooms the American Wing was to publish in 1996.<sup>32</sup> Taking the furniture as her subject matter, Willis's photographs even more closely evoke *Index* drawings. Willis's photographs move into the room framing discrete portions of the space making new compositions out of the Shaker furniture. As opposed to the evenly distributed objects and carefully diffused light from before, Willis crops her images tightly giving well-balanced a-symmetrical groupings with seemingly natural light cutting across the images. Notably, while Cheek's photographs may have been black and white purely for archival purposes, such standards do not fully explain Willis's black and white images taken over fifteen years later, are still resonating with 1930s documents (Figure 2.9).

Although these drawing were intended specifically for aesthetic analysis by future artists and industrial designers, the legacy of these documents and their interpretations of the Shakers has had a much more significant effect. *Index* drawings circulated through numerous exhibitions around the country in large museum shows. Take for instance a major exhibition of *Index* drawings alongside Shaker furniture and other artefacts that took place at the Museum of Modern

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<sup>32</sup> The four photographs are enclosed in an envelope with the AWSF and were not published. On the front of this MMA stationary the following is written in pen: "Shaker: photos by Karen Willis, MMA: for period room book, 1996." The book referenced is: Amelia Peck, William Rieder, Anne-Christine Daskalakis Mathews, Daniëlle O. Kisluk-Grosheide, Wen Fong, James Parker, et al., eds. *Period Rooms in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art: H.N. Abrams, 1996).

**Figure 2.8.** Karen Willis, black & white photograph of Accession number 1972.187.1-3, American Wing, Metropolitan Museum of Art, c.1996. AWSF. (Appendix B: Folder A:5)



**Figure 2.9.** Noel Vicentini, “desk, swivel chair, candlestick and foot warmer hanging from peg rail, V-33,” Church Family, Hancock, MA, c.1930, (Herzberg, *A Promising Venture*, 2012, plate 155, p. 184).



Art in 1936.<sup>33</sup> This high-profile exhibition clearly promoted what might be called a Shaker Modernism, and keyed into the first major museum exhibition of Shaker furniture the year before at the Whitney Museum; both of which set the stage for Benjamin Knott (director of the *Index* from 1940) to collaborate on the 1942 exhibit of *Index* drawings and photographs at the MMA – incidentally the first appearance of Shaker artefacts in the American Wing.<sup>34</sup> It was through such appearances that the documentation of the Shakers in the *Index* had its greatest influence; such exhibitions altered public perception at large and firmly placed the Shakers into a narrative of American Domestic and Industrial Arts as craftsmen producing aesthetic objects.

Formerly considered the primary source for research on Shaker communities since the 1920s, in recent years Edward Deming Andrews and Faith Andrews have been the subject of significant criticism within Shaker Studies. William D. Moore's revisionist history of the *Index*'s role in Shaker historiography brought Ruth Reeves back into the story arguing that the influence of the Andrewses, while vital, has been overemphasized to the detriment of other highly relevant actors.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, current curator of Hancock Shaker Village, Lesley Herzberg, challenges Edward Deming Andrews's accuracy by detailing a conflict-ridden relationship between Reeves at the *Index*, and the Andrewses, who for a short time were under her employ. Herzberg

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<sup>33</sup> Bowe and Richmond, *Selling Shaker*, 43, 65n197.

<sup>34</sup> On Whitney exhibition see Bowe and Richmond, *Selling Shaker*, 29-31; also the section titled "Selling of the Shakers," in Stein, *The Shaker Experience in America*, 394-401, esp. 397. According to Curator Hermon More, the show received around 4,500 visitors. Noted in a letter from the curator to the Andrewses dated 6 December 1935, (The Edward Deming Andrews Memorial Collection, Winterthur Library, Box 24). Cited in Bowe and Richmond, *Selling Shaker*, 61n128. On MMA exhibit see Benjamin Knotts, "Hands to Work and Hearts to God," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 1, no. 7 (March 1943): 231; Bowe and Richmond, *Selling Shaker*, 43, 65n198. Shaker crafts as documented by the *Index* for American Design were exhibited by the Metropolitan as early as December of 1942 within their 83<sup>rd</sup> street gallery. See "Schedule of Special Exhibitions: December, 1942: Metropolitan Museum of Art Press Releases," <http://libmma.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16028coll12/id/73/rec/12> (Accessed April 11, 2016).

<sup>35</sup> Moore, "You'd Swear They Were Modern."



discovered and published in full a series of WPA photographs that had been tampered with by Mr. Andrews, and until recently, predominantly unknown.<sup>36</sup> The Andrewses have been frequently accused of taking a heavy-handed approach to their historical efforts of which they have also been the primary financial beneficiaries. Interestingly, much of what the Andrewses are accused of regarding their photographic documentation also appears in this set of photographs. These newly discovered photographs were taken by Noel Vicentini. Some of them depict Shaker furniture isolated in sparse interior environments similar to Winter's images, which were frequently published by the Andrewses in their books. In fact, it appears that six Vicentini photographs appear un-attributed in the Andrewses' 1937 book *Religion in Wood*, thus firmly establishing their place in the Andrewses historiographical vision (Figure 2.9)<sup>37</sup> Other Vicentini images, however, exposed the less than ideal condition of Shaker structures in the 1930s, the primary difference being that Vicentini's photographs do not appear to be solely of interiors that are currently in use, but also rather spaces and surfaces left over from a former time, slightly covered in dust, and in obvious disrepair (Figure 2.10).

Ultimately it was the Andrewses' published books that characterize their most significant impact on Shaker Historiography. Having published some 23 books and articles between 1932 and 1972, not to mention the many reprintings that appeared in the late 1960s and 1970s, the Andrewses's must appear on any bibliography concerned with the Shakers.<sup>38</sup> Concerning the

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<sup>36</sup> Lesley Herzberg, *A Promising Venture: Shaker Photographs from the WPA*, American Communal Society Series, No.7 (Clinton, NY: Richard W. Couper Press, 2012), pp.11-24. Herzberg and Jerry Grant of Mount Lebanon archive have in large part rectified this falsification.

<sup>37</sup> See Andrews 1982, pp. 29, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43. These correspond respectively to Herzberg 2012, pp. 109 (plate 83), 91 (plate 65), 104 (plate 78), 184 (plate 155), 167 (plate 138), 110 (plate 84).

<sup>38</sup> Mary L. Richmond (compiled and annotated by), *Volume II: About the Shakers, Shaker Literature: A Bibliography in two volumes*, (Hancock, MA & Hanover, NH: Hancock Shaker Village, Inc. & University Press of New England, 1977), pp.6-8.

**Figure 2.10.** Noel Vicentini, “building with clapboards and windows, V-81” probably Mount Lebanon, NY. Black and white photograph (Herzberg, *A Promising Venture*, 2012, p.77, plate 52).



development of period rooms, they were instrumental in the construction of the Shaker rooms in Bath, England at the American Museum of Britain, in Wilmington, DE at the Winterthur Museum, and in New York City at the MMA. All five of the Shaker period rooms now in existence, however, exhibit what Bowe and Richmond call the “Andrews Vision” (Figures 2.1; 2.11-14).<sup>39</sup> This “unmistakable stamp” includes mostly (if not all) artefacts from the Shaker’s so-called “golden era” in the first few decades of the nineteenth-century. “The room is essentially a display of furniture,” they write, “rather than a means of explaining a lifestyle... it concentrates on design and aesthetics, rather than attempting to recreate any sense of verisimilitude.”<sup>40</sup> Setting aside for the moment that “lifestyle” or “verisimilitude” are the goal of a period room (and that these two aspects are commensurable), if this particular vision pervasive amongst Shaker period rooms may be attributed to the Andrewses, then they indeed have had significant and lasting effect on the visualization of the Shakers.

Ultimately, however, it is Faith Andrews who had the most explicit impact on the American Wing’s Shaker displays. The museum purchased a collection of Shaker furniture from Faith in 1966. In a list titled “Shaker Furniture for display,” curator Heckscher itemizes individual pieces of furniture that Andrews offered to the American Wing (Figure 2.15). Alongside the name of the furniture item appears the dollar amount for which the Wing purchased the piece, and also a plate number written in by hand at the margin of the typed document. The plate numbers refer directly to illustrations in the Andrewses’ book *Shaker*

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<sup>39</sup> In Chicago, IL there is one more period room of sorts. It is fascinating that this miniature Shaker period room does *not* conform to the Andrewses aesthetic vision. See: “A18: *Shaker Living Room, c. 1800, c. 1940*,” Miniature room, mixed media, Interior: 9 x 21 3/4 x 24 5/8 in., Scale: 1 inch = 1 foot (Mrs. James Ward Thorne American, 1882-1966). Gift of Mrs. James Ward Thorne, 1942.498. Accessed 31 August 2016. [http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/45363?search\\_no=1&index=8](http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/45363?search_no=1&index=8).

<sup>40</sup> Bowe and Richmond, *Selling Shaker*, 84.

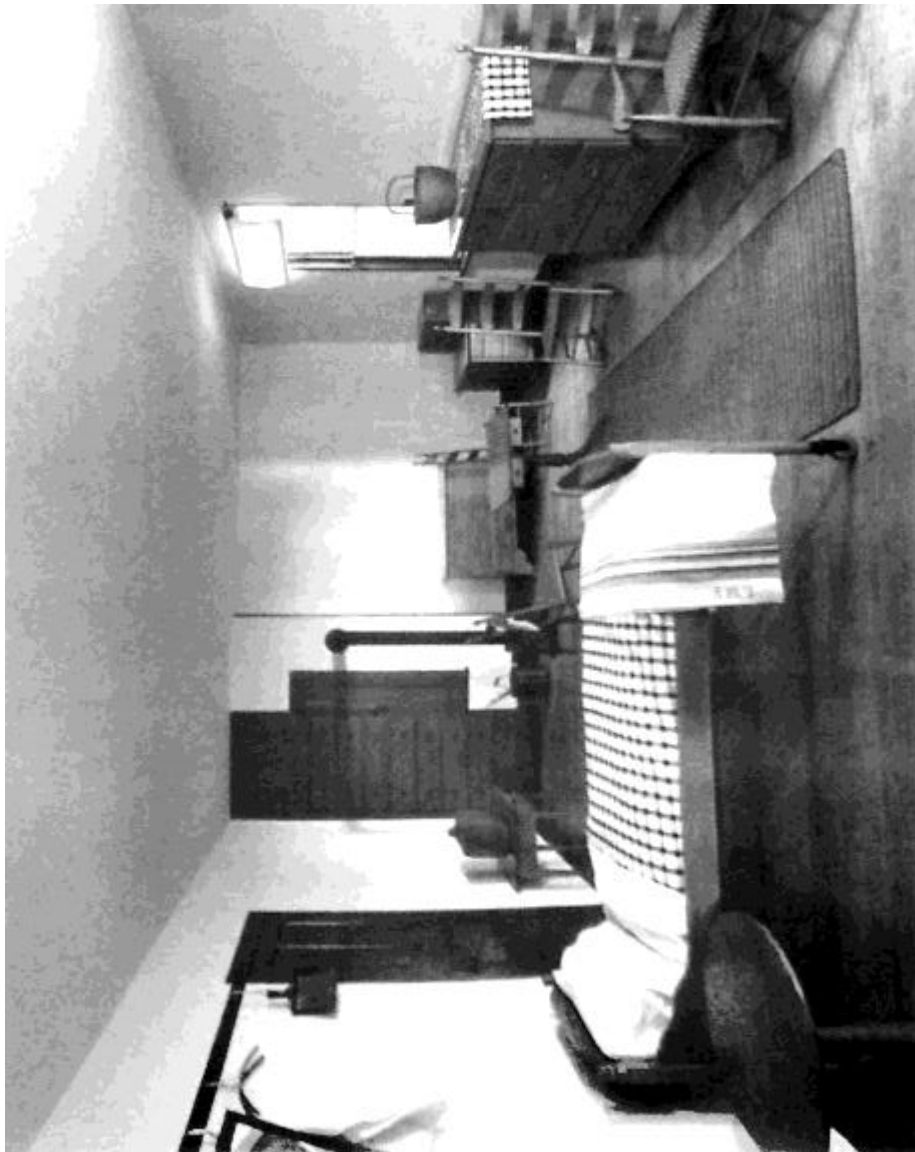
**Figure 2.11.** “The Shaker period room at the American Museum in Britain at Bath, UK,” black and white photograph. (Bowe and Richmond, *Selling Shaker*, p.334)



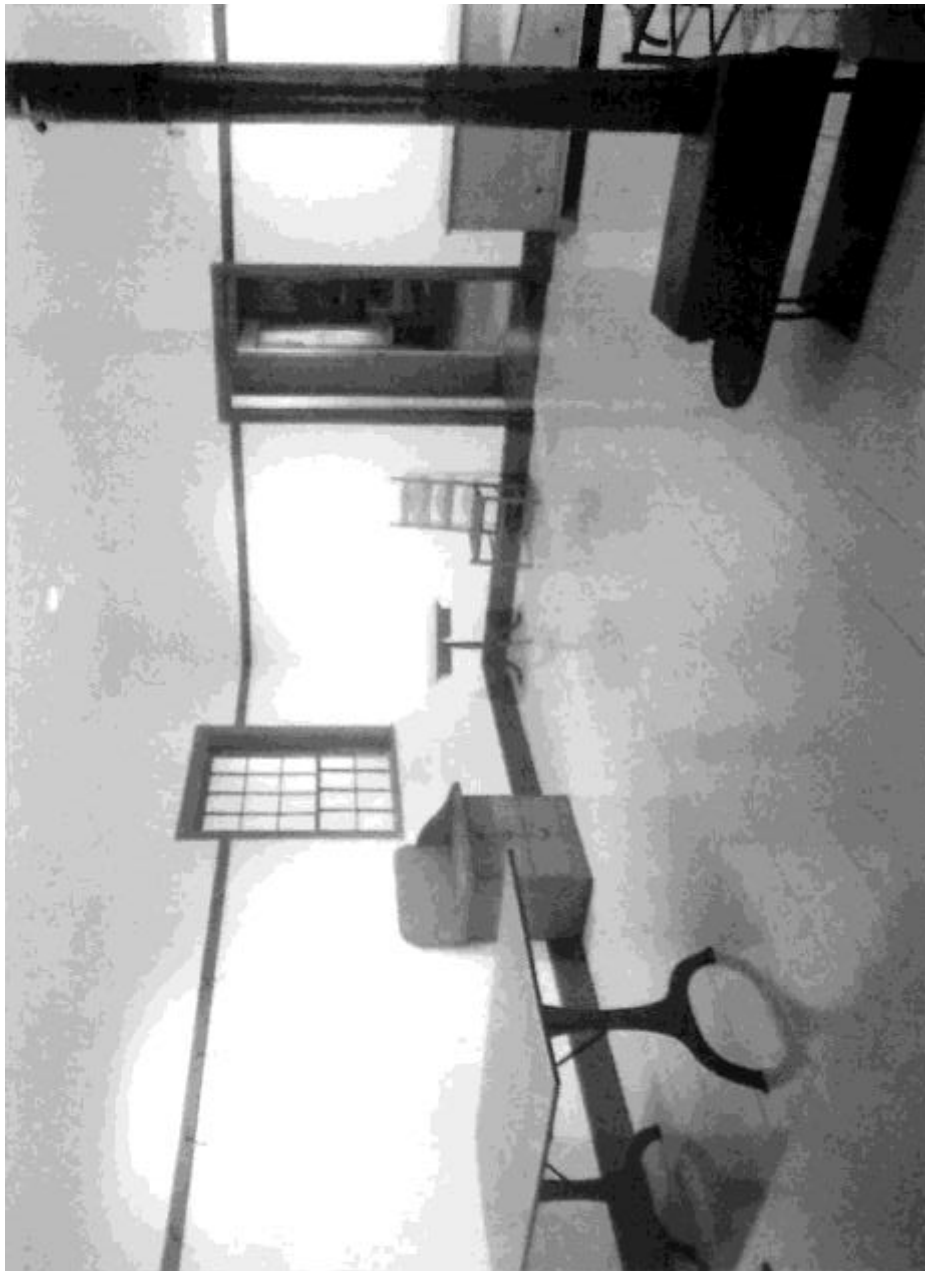
**Figure 2.12.** “The Shaker period room at the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum,”  
Wilmington, DE, black and white photograph. (Bowe and Richmond, *Selling Shaker*, p.339)



**Figure 2.13.** “The Shaker period room at the Philadelphia Museum of Art,” Philadelphia, PA, Accession # 1973.3.1. Attributed to the Shaker Community, Mount Lebanon, NY. Black and white photograph. (Bowe and Richmond, *Selling Shaker*, p.337)



**Figure 2.14.** “The Shaker period room at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts,” Boston, MA, Accession # 62.1556-1559. Black and white photograph. (Bowe and Richmond, *Selling Shaker*, p.338)



*Furniture*, re-published in 1964 (Figure 2.16). Each illustration is a photograph taken by William F. Winter, with a corresponding description and basic history of that item of furniture in an appendix. This explicit link brings us back almost full circle to the first comparison of Cheek's archival photograph and Winter's abstract compositions of Shaker furniture. I will return to these photographs shortly and consider the implications they have directly on the American Wing's room. For now, when seen in context of the other methods of documentation it should hopefully be clear that Cheek was most likely not actively mimicking highly valued images of "the Shakers," but rather acting in concert with an entire lineage and the sheer material momentum of Shaker documentation beginning in the 1920s pervading American popular perception.

One final note on the legacy of these Shaker scholars. Most published work on the Shakers in this time period insists over and over again that Shaker artefacts cannot be severed from Shaker belief and practice, and yet the persistence of their documentation (ironically) seems to provide the conditions for achieving precisely what they warned against. For instance, the Andrewses caution readers in the introduction to *Shaker Furniture*:

The relationship between a way of life and a way of work invests the present study with special interest. ... In the prevailing animus of Shakerism lies the secret of the distinct character of the Believers' furniture... The craft of the sect cannot be appreciated or catalogued without the introduction of this socio-religious background."<sup>41</sup>

Regardless of their insistence, it seems that the subtlety of Shakerism's spiritualism has been predominantly replaced by "belief" in general, in much the same way that the word Shaker has come to refer to a style of furniture. The interpretation of the Shakers as "the Shakers" continues to be disseminated not only through historical documents from HABS or *Index* drawings, but also some historical and preservationist societies, and all major museums to this day.

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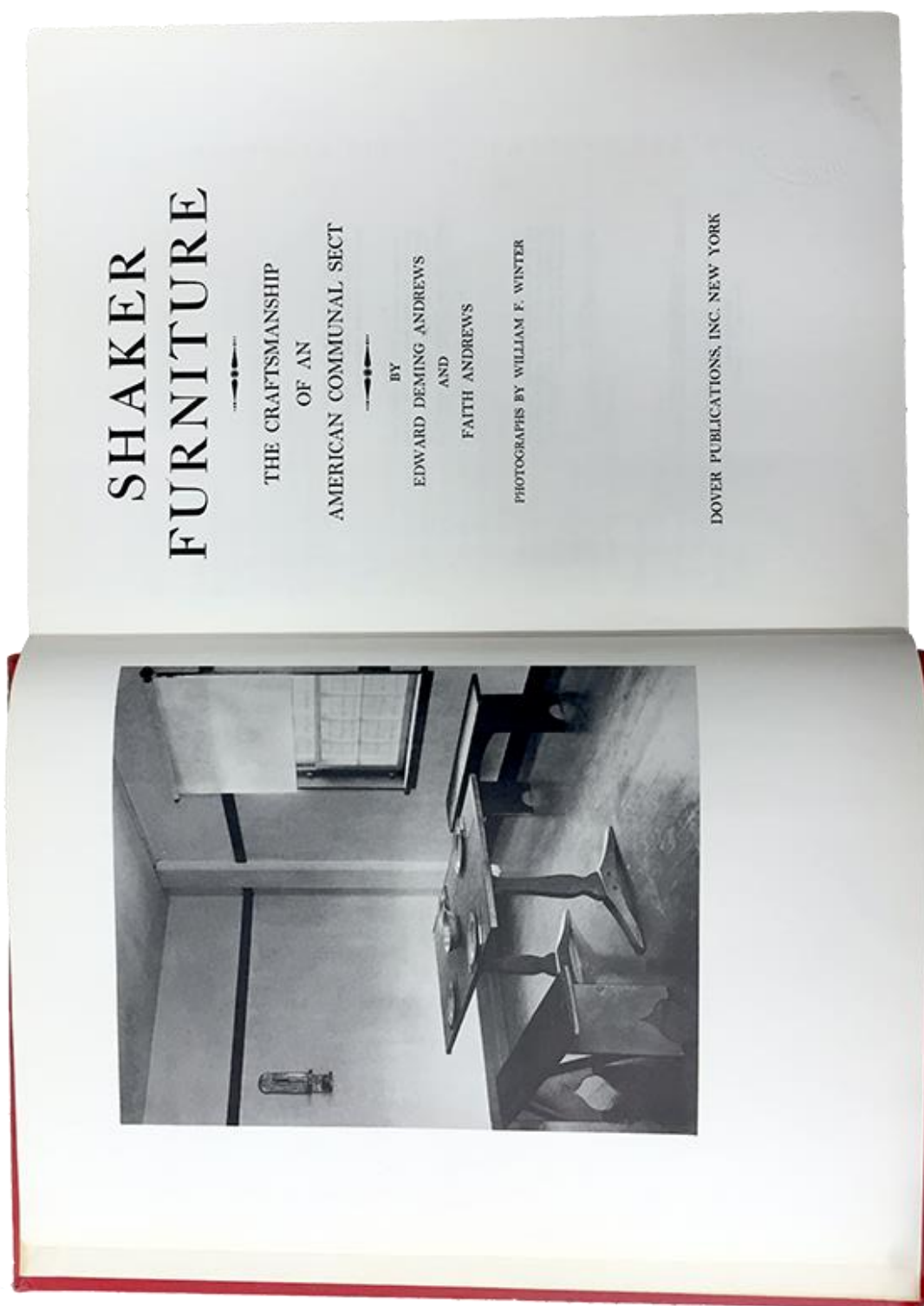
<sup>41</sup> Andrews, *Shaker Furniture*, 3.



**Figure 2.15.** "Furniture for display: SHAKER," List of Shaker Furniture with corresponding Dollar Value, numbers handwritten to left correspond to note at bottom of page, "Plate numbers refer to Shaker Furniture by Edward Deming Andrews and Faith Andrews," c.1966, AWSF. (Appendix B: Folder A:16.1)

<u>Furniture for display</u>		SHAKER
Collection of Shaker objects offered by Mrs. Edward Deming Andrews		
For dining hall installation:		
1 Community trestle dining table (plate 3)		\$ 4,000
2 Long bench with low back for dining table		800
3 Ministry's trestle dining table (frontispiece)		5,000
4 Bench for ministry's dining table		450
5-10 6 one-slat chairs (plate 3)		2,400
11 Tin cupboard		1,000
Inst. 66.11-15 Peg racks		200
12 Isaac Young bowl		200
For sisters' work room:		
13 Weave chest or sill cupboard (plate 24)		2,500
14 Weaving room double counter (plate 42)		3,000
15 One-drawer chest painted "Heavenly blue"		350
16 Sewing stand or desk painted red (plate 31 left)		750
17 Rimmed-top sewing table (plate 17)		500
18 Sewing table with 6 drawers		1,000
19 Seed stand, adjustable (plate 12 second from right)		750
20 Candlestand, tripod base (plate 12 right end)		450
21 Candlestand, umbrella base (plate 16)		500
22 Rack of small drawers for sewing table		350
23 Sister's maple rocker		350
24 2 three-slat chairs stained yellow		500
25 Swivel chair (plate 31 right)		400
26 Mirror with brush (plate 7)		500
(30, 21) 27 Shoemaker's candlestand (plate 47 right)		300
(33) 32 Sconce		150
34-40 7 oval wood boxes		550
Miscellaneous items:		
41 Inspirational drawing: Consider the Lilies		3,000
Inst. 66.16 Poster		-
Total		\$29,950
* Plate numbers refer to <u>Shaker Furniture</u> by Edward Deming Andrews and Faith Andrews.		

**Figure 2.16.** Title Page spread from *Shaker Furniture* (1964), Edward Demining Andrews and Faith Andrews.



### 2.3. *The First American Modernists*

Through this historiographical transformation, “The Shakers” eventually emerged as an early example (if not the founders) of a uniquely American design legacy. In a review of a 2014 Shaker exhibition published in the *Wall Street Journal*, Lance Esplund echoes this long standing sentiment, stating plainly that the Shakers were “The First American Modernists.”<sup>42</sup> Often framed as early American precursors to European Modernism, the Shaker period room is in part a result of an aesthetic resonance between Shaker artefacts and canonical “Modern” architecture. Taking a closer look at the connections between early twentieth-century historiography of Modern architecture and the Shaker historiography just introduced helps elucidate the impact of this claim on the production of the Shaker period room.

Lewis Mumford (1895-1990) cites the Shakers twice in his 1924 book *Sticks & Stones: A Study of American Civilization*.<sup>43</sup> To Mumford, the Shakers appear as the last living (and perhaps best) example of a form of Republicanism tied closely with the communitarian ideal practiced by the early Puritans: not just a city on a hill, but a village invested with technological potential, and environmental awareness. Mumford exemplifies this by discussing the distribution of land to “the poorer members of the corporation to build houses” once they had been voted into the community. A friend of his called this system “Yankee communism,” and Mumford “cheerfully bring[s] this institution to the attention of those who do not realize upon what subversive principles Americanism, historically rests.” This same “spirit,” Mumford writes, lingered “in the

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<sup>42</sup> Lance Esplund, “The First American Modernists; for the Shakers, “Beauty Rests in Utility” *Wall Street Journal* [New York, N.Y.] 06 Aug 2014.

<sup>43</sup> Mumford humbly distinguishes this book as the first book on American Architecture. He may have overlooked the work of Louisa Caroline Tuthill. See her *History of architecture, from the earliest times; its present condition in Europe and the United States; with a biography of eminent architects, and a glossary of architectural terms* (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1848).

utopian communities of the nineteenth century,” and in particular, “in the architecture of the Shaker community at Mount Lebanon, New York.”<sup>44</sup> Wrapping up his opening chapter titled “The Medieval Tradition,” Mumford asserts the Shakers as the “most sturdy and economically successful of religious utopias.”

By 1934, Mumford’s attitude to the Shakers had shifted. In his *Technics and Civilization*, Mumford subsumes “the Shakers of New England” with “the Mormons of Utah” as part and parcel of “the same faint line” of Perfectionism in the United States. These groups, rather than exemplifying a home-grown ideal, had become various groups of humane fanatics, and like so many others during this time, they sought to evade (if only briefly) “the aimless brutality of nature, and the more purposeful brutality of man.”<sup>45</sup> With this shift, Mumford keys into the myth of the Shakers banding together in the wilderness cordoned off from the *outside world*. He would continue to mention the Shakers as a characteristic example of “architectural inventiveness” and their use of architecture and landscape management in search of the good life up to at least 1961.<sup>46</sup>

Although Mumford does not seem to have commented on the opening of the Shaker room in 1981 (he was in his mid-90s at this point), he did comment on the opening of the American

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<sup>44</sup> Lewis Mumford, *Sticks and Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1955), 3-4. Echoing Mumford, Keith Melville writes of the Shakers that “as with so much else in the American tradition,” we imported radical ideas “and put them to the test of Yankee practicality.” Keith Melville, *Communes in the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life* (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1972), 39.

<sup>45</sup> Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 297.

<sup>46</sup> The latest comment I have found appears in Mumford’s 1961 *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (A Harvest Book). Republished with approval from Mumford in 1989. I should also mention that despite what seems like a very positive attitude toward the Shakers as those who employed technology to seek out the good life in harmony with nature around them, Mumford makes no reference to the Shakers in his book *The Story of Utopias* published just two years prior to *Sticks & Stones* in 1922. Neither is there mention of the Shakers in *Sketches from Life: The Autobiography of Lewis Mumford: The Early Years* of 1982. Did Mumford learn about the Shakers at some point between 1922 and 1924? If he already knew of them, why not include them in a book explicitly about utopian communities?

Wing in a December 1924 issue of *The New Republic*, a Progressive journal founded by fellow architectural historian Herbert Croly. To a Mumford having just witnessed this new application of period room technology, The American Wing “is not merely an exhibition of art, it is a pageant of American history. ... nothing so complete and so tactful has ever been accomplished before by an American museum.”<sup>47</sup> Perhaps he would have approved of it had he been able to visit the “Shaker Retiring Room”; however, for a historian as focused as Mumford was on the history of both architecture and technology, if he had, perhaps his comment would have (by then) concerned more than the American Wing’s tact, and extended to their particular use of technology to display the pragmatism of the Shaker’s “Yankee” communal efforts.

Sigfried Giedion appears far less interested in the Shakers, however, he (like Mumford) refers to them at a critical juncture of his book *Space, Time, and Architecture* as an emblematic example in his analysis of American architecture.<sup>48</sup> In the chapter titled “American Development,” Giedion provides his account of what he terms “American Functionalism.” While only referencing the Shakers as one example among many to illustrate a single point of his argument, Giedion’s account offers a clear indication of the canonical view of American Shaker architecture as it had pervaded both intellectual and popular culture at this point in time. Giedion tells us that between 1850 and 1890 America developed the “strong manifestation of a new and specifically American spirit,” an American functionalism, which, stripped bare of ornamentation, derives its beauty from the clean lines of pure, rational utility. He ultimately characterizes this spirit by suggesting the similarity between the balloon frame and the Windsor chair, which

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<sup>47</sup> Lewis Mumford, *The New Republic* (December 1924). Quoted in Marshall B. Davidson, “Those American Things,” *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 3 (1970): 231.

<sup>48</sup> Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time, and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*, The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures for 1938-39 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, fifth edition, revised and enlarged, 1967). First published in 1941.

parallel one another insofar as “there is the same tendency toward anonymous work and toward serial manufacture, with lightness and efficiency achieved by the simplest means” (Figure 2.17).<sup>49</sup> The same spirit also finds expression in the large plane surfaces of exterior walls made of brick, wood, or stone. Giedion illustrates this simple, anonymous, and pragmatic aesthetic with the “flat granite walls” of what he calls the “Shaker Community House” at Concord, VT of 1832 (Figure 2.18.).<sup>50</sup> The version of Shaker architecture that Giedion offers as typical of this American functionalist spirit connects their material culture, organization of labor, and anonymous authorship all to the value-system of Modern Architecture.<sup>51</sup>

But why exactly does Giedion reference the Shakers? What, in his 1938 visit to Harvard University (and his first to the United States) where he delivered the chapters of this book as a series of lectures, led him to see Shaker architecture as emblematic of the American spirit? It is unclear whether Giedion was aware of the Shakers before his visit to the United States, or whether an American colleague or acquaintance introduced him during this visit. However, some insight can be gleaned from the image of a Shaker dwelling house that he chose to publish as Figure 216 in his magnum opus to the “new tradition” in the practice of architecture. Most significantly, this image is not a reproduction from HABS, or the *Index*, or any other published image of the Shakers, but is a photograph taken by Giedion himself. Aside from the fact that there is no doubt that Giedion was close enough to touch it, the photograph noticeably reframes Shaker architecture. Although, like Winter’s and Cheek’s photographs before, Giedion’s is also black & white and taken specifically for purposes of documentation and publication, there would

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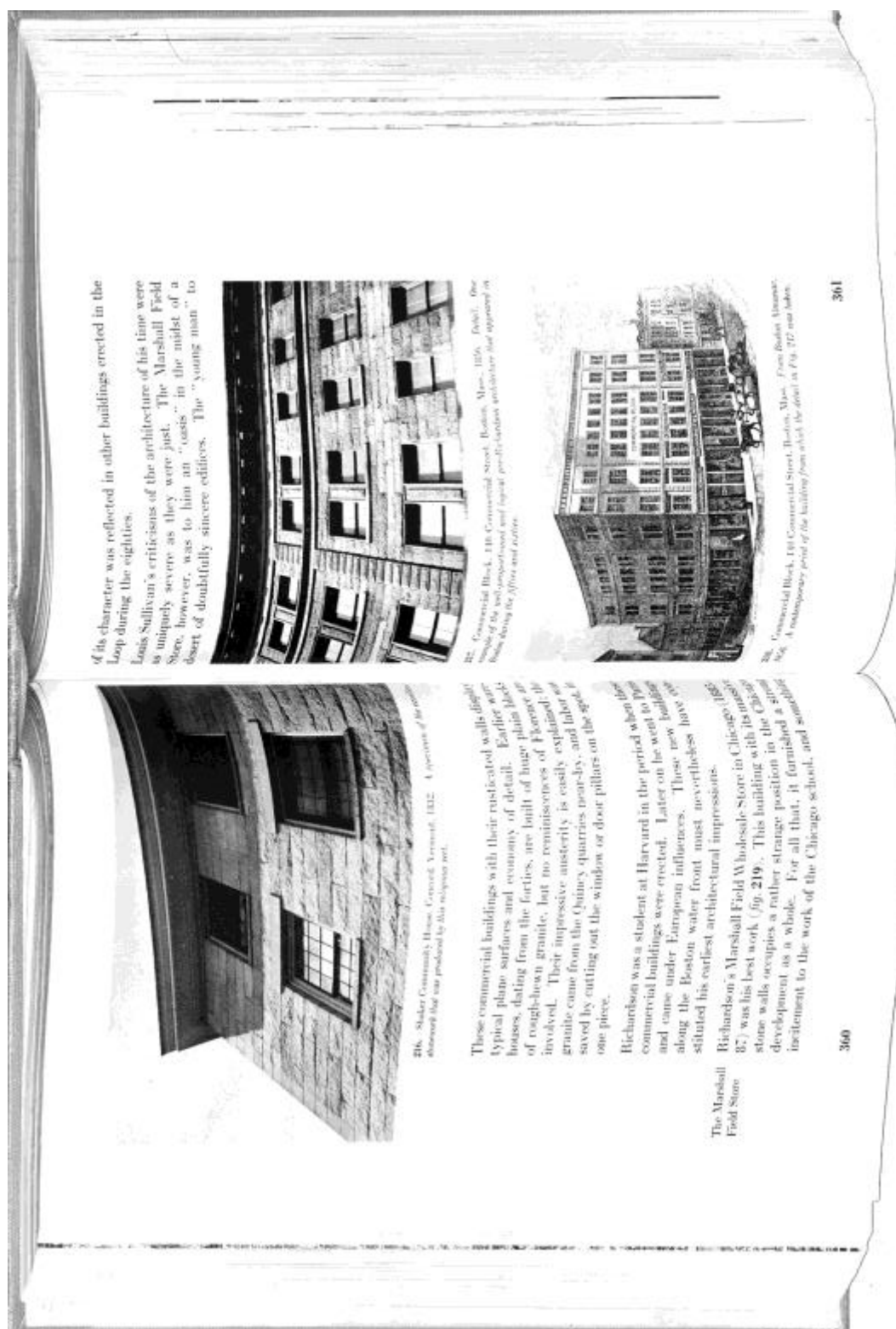
<sup>49</sup> Giedion, *Space, Time, and Architecture*, 355

<sup>50</sup> Giedion, *Space, Time, and Architecture*, 360.

<sup>51</sup> Incidentally, a 1985 book by the MMA has its entry on Windsor chairs recto verso their page on Shaker chairs. See Marshal B. Davidson and Elizabeth Stillinger, *The American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 153 (plate 240), 154 (plate 241).



**Figure 2.18.** Spread from Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time, and Architecture* (1941) showing a correspondence between a Shaker stone facade and two other American commercial stone facades, pp. 360-61.





be no mistaking the Giedion photograph for any others of the North Family Dwelling. Taken at an upward angle and in close proximity to the building's facade, Giedion catches the facade in sharp lighting giving all possible relief to what he termed a "plane" and "unadorned" surface. With Giedion's Shakers there is no furniture, no positioning of artefacts, and no interior. Nevertheless, the impact of Giedion's view reinforces rather than destabilizes the dominant historiographical version of "the Shakers" insofar as here too they are reduced to sheer material presence, anonymous craftsmanship, and a labor process specific to American development.

Architectural historians tend to depict the Shakers as emblematic of "American" tendencies in early ingenuity and innovation. Emboldened perhaps by this vote of confidence in the relevance of "the Shakers" to American architectural history stemming from two such canonical sources, Shaker studies scholars have consistently taken up the rhetoric of "Modern" architecture from this point forward. The earliest example of this emphasis comes, as discussed earlier, with the aims of the *Index for American Design* in the 1930s, and expressed as such at least as early as the 1940s.<sup>52</sup> However, it is also a common strain in the writing of the Andrewses and other early twentieth-century Shaker scholars. Two later examples provide the most explicit links with architectural discourse, which remains mostly implicit in the rest.<sup>53</sup> In a 1961 article published in the *Shaker Quarterly*, Mary Lou Conlin writes that "there is a particularly interesting comparison to be made between the past architectural achievements of the Shakers

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<sup>52</sup> Prior to the many references to Shaker Functionalism that will arise mostly in the 1960s and 70s, the Shakers were typically referred to as practical, pragmatic, utilitarian, and so on. For the earliest reference to the Shakers as "Functionalists" that I have found see Writers' Program of New Hampshire, "Shaker Crafts" in *Hands that Built New Hampshire*, (Stephen Daye, 1940), 224.

<sup>53</sup> Andrews and Andrews, *Shaker Furniture*, 1964; Marguerite Fellows Melcher, *The Shaker Adventure* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1941), 191-206.

and the present theory of Dr. Walter Gropius.”<sup>54</sup> Conlin writes that while Gropius claimed we would have to return to the Middle Ages in order to find the kind of collaboration that would establish the true forms of a “total architecture” in community living, he need only look as far back as the Shakers to find precisely what he was looking for: “an analysis of living essentials which could then be developed through the collaboration of individuals directed toward the formal expression of the common goal.”<sup>55</sup>

June Sprigg, a leading Shaker curator, compared the work of the Shakers to Louis Sullivan’s maxim *form follows function*.<sup>56</sup> In her 1975 book *By Shaker Hands*, Sprigg writes, “Long before the Chicago architect Louis Sullivan[,]... a small and relatively obscure religious sect was quietly putting this standard into every practice of their daily lives. The Shakers worded their proverb slightly differently, but the ideal was the same: “Every force evolves a form.”<sup>57</sup> Sullivan’s phrase originally appeared in an article published in 1896 titled, “The tall office building artistically considered.”<sup>58</sup> The maxim refers in detail to the architectural problem of relating artistic expression with structural requirements and new building materials at a time in the United States when style, taste, and typological innovations were in high tension. As with most maxims, Sullivan’s phrase is easily stripped of its context, and Sprigg quickly elides 150

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<sup>54</sup> Mary Lou Conlin, “The “Total Architecture” of the Shakers,” *The Shaker Quarterly*, Sabbathday Lake, Poland Spring, Maryland, United Society, (1961): 124.

<sup>55</sup> Conlin, “The “Total Architecture” of the Shakers,” 125. It should be noted that this version of Gropius, were he to think as much of the Shakers, would bring us right up to Hayden’s architectural history.

<sup>56</sup> June Sprigg, *By Shaker Hands: The art and the world of the Shakers – the furniture and artifacts, and the spirit and precepts embodied in their simplicity, beauty, and functional practicality* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975). See esp. the chapter “Utility,” 99-106. June Sprigg is a central figure in the world of Shaker Studies and curatorial work in the 1970s. Then head curator of the Hancock Shaker Village, Sprigg consulted for Shaker shows all over the United States including her significant contribution to the landmark show at the Whitney in 1986, “Shaker Design.” See Bowe and Richmond, *Selling Shaker*.

<sup>57</sup> Sprigg, *By Shaker Hands*, p.99.

<sup>58</sup> Louis H. Sullivan, “The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered,” *Lippincott’s Magazine* (March 1896): 403–409.

years of contextual specificity and simplifies Sullivan's phrase in order to align it with the Shaker's pragmatic sense of utility and economy.

For those architectural historians directly concerned with Shaker architecture, the claim to Modernism has been held somewhat more skeptically even if it has not stopped them from employing Sprigg's simplification. Both Hayden in her 1976 study of American utopias, and Nicoletta in her 1995 typological survey of Shaker buildings assert, as Nicoletta writes in her introduction, that "the Shaker legacy of plain wood forms anticipated twentieth-century works by Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and others."<sup>59</sup> And elsewhere that the Shakers were not "exceptions," but rather "part of a larger movement in American design, the influence of which is still being felt in the United States and Europe."<sup>60</sup> More recently, McLendon's 2010 dissertation sets aside such claims to "Simplicity" and "Modernism" with reference to Sally Promey's concise refutation from the Preface to her 1993 book *Spiritual Spectacles*.<sup>61</sup> Promey's conclusion:

So an assumed affinity between the Shaker aesthetic and the modernist aesthetic engendered enthusiasm for Shaker artifacts. The collectors, antiquarians, and artists responsible for the birth of interest in Shaker material culture appreciated modern design. And they were struck by an apparent similarity between shaker artifacts... and modern art. ... This early twentieth-century excitement at discovering the roots of "modern" design in the American material past has continued to shape public knowledge of Shaker artifacts.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Although, Nicoletta was more reticent in her *JSAH* article of 2003 where she failed to mention this fact. Dolores Hayden's reference to Modernism was more subdued than Nicoletta's 1995 claim, but nevertheless, clearly implied by the epigraph to the chapter on Shaker architecture in *Seven American Utopias* where she cites Shaker hymns and maxims which plainly evoke Modernist maxims when provided without sufficient explanation. Nicoletta, *The Architecture of the Shakers*, 1995, 14.

<sup>60</sup> Julie Nicoletta, "Sisters' Retiring Room from the North Family Dwelling, Mount Lebanon, New York, Ca. 1845." *Winterthur Portfolio* 46, no. 2/3 (June 2012): E42.

<sup>61</sup> See Sally Promey, *Spiritual Spectacles: Vision and Image in Mid-nineteenth Shakerism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), xx-xxii, esp. 211n.26.

<sup>62</sup> Promey, *Spiritual Spectacles*, xxi

Responding to the blunt resonance of the well-known documentary photographs of stark Shaker interiors, Promey asserts that the “purpose of Shaker wall pegs, after all, was to hang things.

Shaker baskets and boxes were meant to be filled. And people sat in Shaker chairs.”<sup>63</sup>

I cannot think of a more appropriate rejoinder. Despite Promey’s well-articulated dispatching of the Modernist myth from considerations of Shaker architecture and the Shaker way of life, the notion persists. In the American Wing’s most recent exhibition of the Shakers, Alyce Perry Englund, the American Wing’s new Assistant Curator of American Domestic Arts, perpetuates this trend with “Simple Gifts: Shaker at The Met” (2016-17). The press release explains that this exhibition “shows how Shaker design overlapped with other design styles” by illustrating “the lasting impact of the Shakers on modern design and performance.”<sup>64</sup> It continues:

Shaker artifacts are grouped near key works by the modern artist Charles Sheeler (1883–1965), and a video projection shows Martha Graham performing the ballet *Appalachian Spring*. Choreographed by Graham to Aaron Copland’s timeless musical score, the ballet was performed on a stage set by Isamu Noguchi. All three artists were inspired by Shaker life.

Shaker inspiration will be taken up directly in the following chapter; for the time being, the point to be made consists of considering the many works of documentation and historiography which have gone into the assertion that the “Shaker life” is best exemplified by not just “Shaker design,” but its many overlaps “with other design styles.”

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<sup>63</sup> Promey, *Spiritual Spectacles*, xxi

<sup>64</sup> “Press Release: Simple Gifts: Shaker at The Met.” (New York, NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art), July 12, 2016, <http://www.metmuseum.org/press/exhibitions/2016/simple-gifts#> (Accessed 4 August 2016). In 2011, Kristina Wilson argues that Charles Sheeler’s paintings made between 1926 and 1939 “critique the contemporary collecting fads for all things Americana,” and “possess modernist self-consciousness, ambivalence, and irony toward their subject matter.” Wilson’s essay is a good place to begin if considering the claim to Shaker Modernism made by their “influence” on Sheeler’s work. See Kristina Wilson, “Ambivalence, Irony, and Americana: Charles Sheeler’s ‘American Interiors,’” *Winterthur Portfolio* 45, no. 4 (December 2011): 249–76.

Englund's perpetuation falls in line with the narrative of American Domestic Art established at the American Wing by its former head curator, Morrison H. Heckscher. During the development of the Shaker room and the renovation of the American Wing as a whole, Heckscher's interest in American architecture intimately tied the developmental history of domestic art to American Modernism and its historiography with three key insertions. All purchased in 1972, Heckscher sought to install a Frank Lloyd Wright period room, a matching set of Adler and Sullivan staircases from the Chicago Stock Exchange building, and the careful placement of the "Shaker Retiring Room." This parallel between Shaker historiography and that of "Modern" architecture makes it possible to position the Shaker architecture of Mount Lebanon c.1835 in a specifically American lineage of Modernism.

By inserting "the Shakers" into the American Wing's narrative, Heckscher drew a continuous line from the Colonial American interiors and domestic arts of the late-seventeenth century, through the "Shaker Retiring Room" emblematic of the early-nineteenth century, and up to its conclusion in the 1916 Francis W. Little house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. It is no coincidence that the Shaker room emerges in the American Wing during the same year as both the Wright living room and the Sullivan staircases, adding the Shaker room allows the American Wing to imply that Wright's Modernism evolved directly out of early American colonial architecture. Much as Nikolaus Pevsner found the seeds of Art Nouveau in the design and careful articulation of furniture and other domestic arts in his 1949 book *Pioneers of Modern Design*, the simplicity of Shaker functionalist artefacts marked a clear stage in the growth of American domestic art and architecture culminating in its greatest "hero."<sup>65</sup> Inflected with Heckscher's

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<sup>65</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design: from William Morris to Walter Gropius* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1949). See Pevsner's chapter on "Art Nouveau" and the significance of the Decorative Arts as intimately tied to, for instance, Louis Sullivan's "severe functionalism."

own interests in American architecture, the American Wing's linear history of American domestic arts required a native anchor for Modern architecture, and "the Shakers" stepped in quickly to fill the role. If it were not for this historiographical link, it is doubtful the Shakers could have appeared in the American Wing's narrative.

#### **2.4. *Build a Room, Get a Photograph***

Bringing this back once again to the documentation employed in the production of the Shaker room, Nicoletta's 2012 review of the Shaker period room at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) shows how the aesthetic focus of Shaker historiography from the 1920s and 30s exacerbated by Modernism affects the development of a period room.<sup>66</sup> As the Introduction laid out, period room technology allows many different aims to overlap and coexist within each museum display. In the case of the Shaker room, it is ambiguous whether the intention is to depict "Shaker Style" or a historical work of Shaker architecture. Perhaps the American Wing room aims at the presentation of the "Shaker style," much in the same way that the American Wing's displays of domestic interiors during the 1920s sought to express coherent colonial styles, rather than specific colonial buildings. Or perhaps, following Heckscher, this period room might seek to present Shaker architecture as a predecessor of a Wrightian craft-based American Modernism. But, does this mean that Heckscher fully left "style" to the wayside as he situated Wright's Francis W. Little house in its proper American lineage? Surely not. Even his depiction of Frank Lloyd Wright seems to emphasize style or aesthetic over socio-political, or disciplinary agendas. Alternatively, the MMA's Shaker room could offer an appropriate and neutral

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<sup>66</sup> Nicoletta, "Sisters' Retiring Room," E37-43.

environment for displaying masterpieces of Shaker furniture as would seem to be the case from the many essays published (and unpublished) on behalf of the American Wing.

Why should this matter? Attempting to determine what the Shaker room was constructed to display both matters a great deal and remains wholly irrelevant – at least insofar as seeking out a *single* accurate interpretation of the room. It is entirely possible that the Shaker room is the product of all of these intentions at once. Rather than criticizing a lack of clarity or coherence, I submit that it is possible all were attempted and even completed at once; that is, perhaps one curator pursued style, one architectural lineage, one accuracy, and another the display of masterpieces. Furthermore, it is likely that the other departments collaborating on say wood sample analysis were unconcerned with the overall agenda of the room itself. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, the construction of Shaker period rooms in numerous locations tends to follow what has been called the “Andrews Vision,” and the PMA room analyzed by Nicoletta is no different. Winter’s photographs, as shown above, are employed as a key artefact in much of Shaker historiography, and they emphasize the “stark aesthetic” of Shaker artefacts and spaces. This kind of visualization “does not provide an accurate picture of how these interiors looked or functioned over time,” Nicoletta writes of the PMA Shaker Room, rather it:

perpetuates ideas of a timeless simplicity and perfection that were, in part, the creation of twentieth-century photographers, ...who nostalgically concentrated on the stark simplicity of Shaker forms, rather than on the reality of interiors that would have held Shaker-made pieces, as well as objects acquired from the outside world. In fact, Winter admitted to moving Shaker pieces to obtain the look he wanted.<sup>67</sup>

In other words, for Nicoletta, Philadelphia’s Shaker period room, makes the mistake of trying to look like a Winter photograph. Evidence suggests to the contrary that photographs like this are

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<sup>67</sup> Nicoletta, “Sisters’ Retiring Room,” E42

more of a reflection of the photographer and *his* view of the Shakers, than of “the reality of interiors that would have held Shaker-made pieces.” Granted: it is clear from his photographs that Winter did in fact re-arrange furniture so as to “pose” his version of Shaker-like still-lives. (Figure 2.3)<sup>68</sup>

However, Nicoletta’s critique falls prey to the documents central to her argument. I feel safe in asserting, to use Nicoletta’s own words a little too bluntly, that the museum did not seek to construct an “*accurate picture*,” but instead, some kind of accurate period room. More than mere semantics, Nicoletta’s critique of the Shaker room’s accuracy depends itself upon the demand for photographic correspondence between this newly built work of architecture and “real” Shaker life c.1835, which is to say the photograph itself has already disappeared. My emphasis on Nicoletta’s language here is surely too literal, but my point is that Nicoletta is not literal enough. Even assuming that such a correspondence was achievable (either between the “reality” of an interior and a photograph, or of the photograph and a newly built period room), does verisimilitude equal accuracy beyond mere visual correspondence when it comes to Shaker architecture? What constitutes the faithful reproduction of an historical work of architecture? How much does it have to do with those who built it? Although this challenge will be taken up in more detail in the next chapter, it raises a question here regarding just what would make, say, the Frank Lloyd Wright room verifiably accurate, and the Shaker room, demonstrably inaccurate? The answer cannot logically have to do with visual (much less literal) correspondence between a representation of the past, and a construction in the present insofar as neither can claim to be neutral with regards to the Shaker’s elaborate history.

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<sup>68</sup> For a critique of Winter’s photographs see D. Schorch, *The Photographs of William F. Winter, Jr., 1899-1939* (New York: D.A. Schorch, 1989).



One might take Nicoletta's critique one step further and ask, of all Winter's photographs, and of all the other photographs freely available through HABS, and of the many other depictions circulating in the *Index* or in the many books of the Andrewses, why it was that the museum chose to make a room that looked like *this* in particular. Put another way, why do the five Shaker period rooms in existence all look alike? As discussed in the introduction above, period room technology is neither straightforward, nor consistent, and its strength lay in making a long and complex process appear to have obvious results. So, if these photographs inaccurately portray a Shaker retiring room, perhaps we should look to a different source of evidence to indicate some explanation for their verisimilitude.

As it happens, the Shaker Folders contain three color photographs of the North Family Dwelling's retiring room before its demolition – and this time in color (Figure 2.19-21).<sup>69</sup> These photographs, taken by an unknown author and archived without any citation, can be inserted in the timeline between Winter's depictions of the North Family Dwelling and Cheek's documentation of the completed Shaker room, and in so doing disrupt what might otherwise be taken as a continuity from the 1920s to 1981. Because it was taken before the room was fully dismantled, this third photograph depicts *in situ* many of the architectural elements recognizable in Cheek's image, and necessary to complete the display. It also shows not only what was excluded from the later period room, but also – simply put – what the room looked like just prior to its demolition.<sup>70</sup>

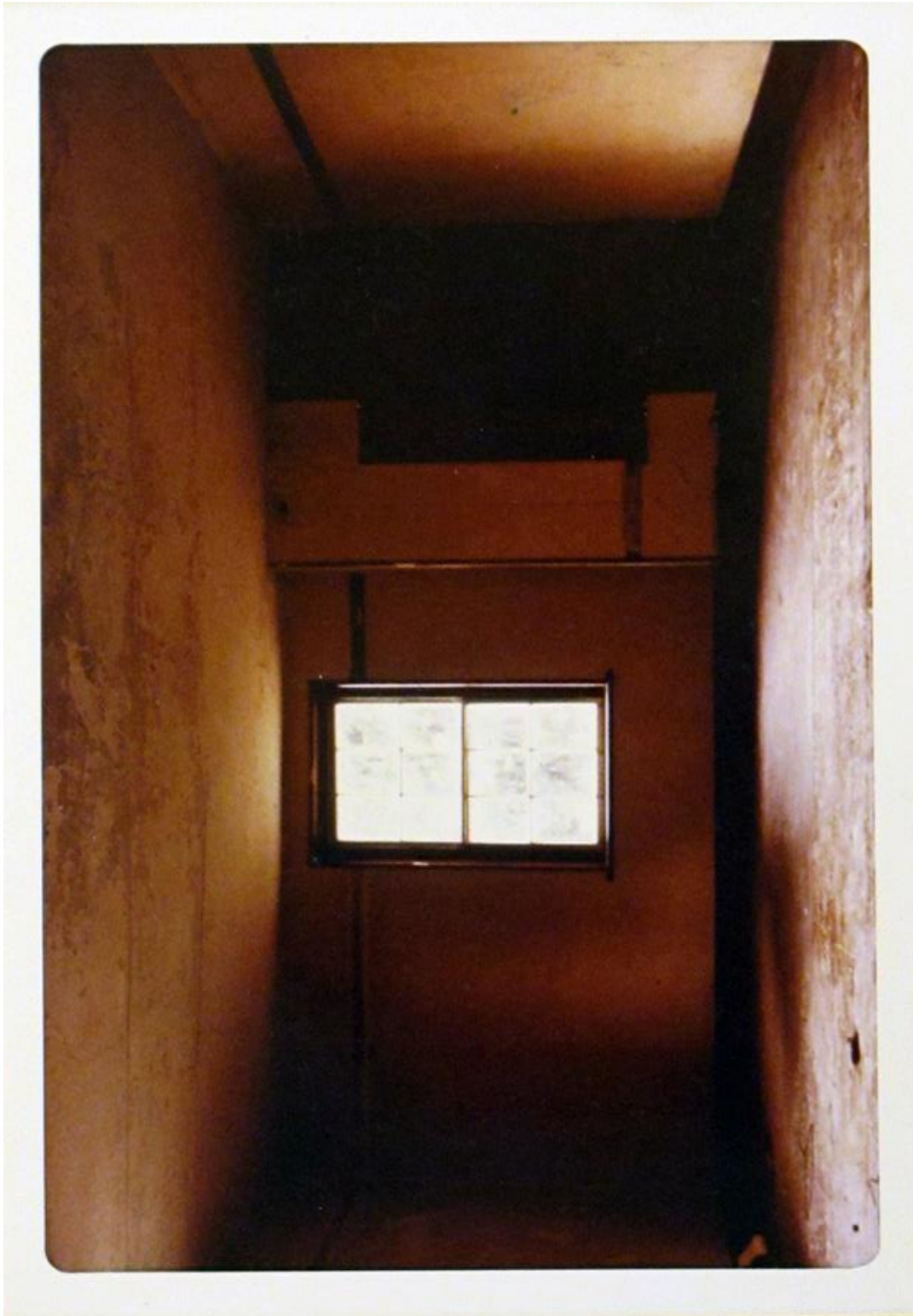
For instance, notice the light in this image: without an even distribution of artefacts to capture, the unknown photographer stands comfortably within the room looking directly at the

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<sup>69</sup> The photograph is most likely taken with Kodachrome film given the date and informal nature of the shot.

<sup>70</sup> It should be noted that this color photograph can in no way be considered less problematic or less *tampered-with* than Richard Cheek's black and white archival document.

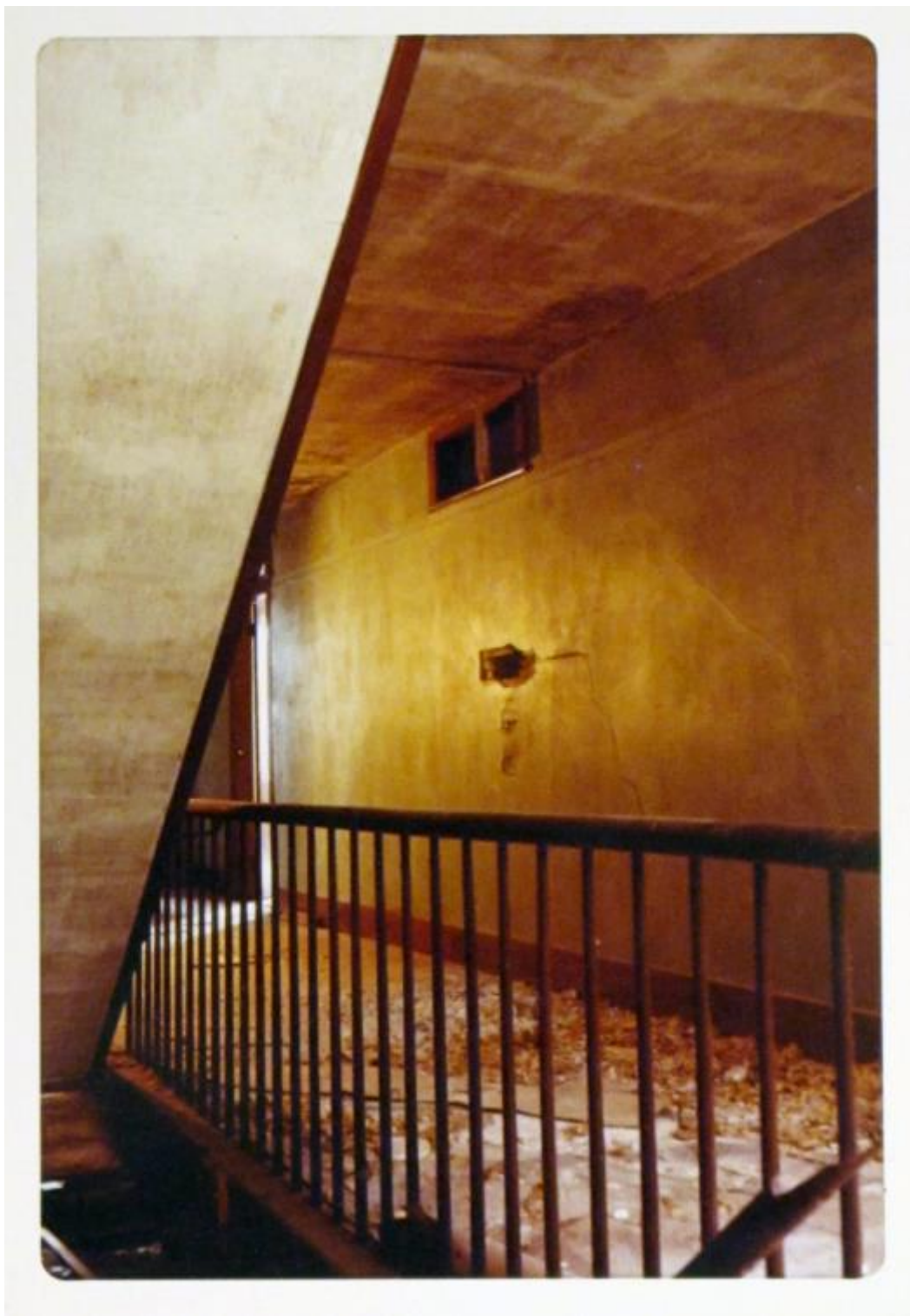
**Figure 2.19.** Author Unknown, color photograph 1 (of 3) of interior in North Family Dwelling, Mount Lebanon, New York, AWSF, before August 1972 [probably taken during disassembly]. (Appendix B: Folder A: 6.1)



**Figure 2.20.** Author Unknown, color photograph 2 (of 3) of interior in North Family Dwelling, Mount Lebanon, New York, AWSF, before August 1972 [probably taken during disassembly]. (Appendix B: Folder A: 6.2)



**Figure 2.21.** Author Unknown, color photograph 3 (of 3) of interior in North Family Dwelling, Mount Lebanon, New York, AWSF, before August 1972 [probably taken during disassembly]. (Appendix B: Folder A: 6.3)





rear wall, rather than pressed up against one of the edges of the room as Cheek had been. Natural light glares through the windows straight ahead and from the left sharply highlighting the floor, ceiling, and opposite wall. Here, there are both actual windows letting daylight into the room, and no equipment to control light conditions. This anonymous photographer's depiction is incapable of matching up to the archival quality of Richard Cheek's work on many levels extending beyond the technical and circumstantial difficulties. Nor is there a discernable subject as in all of Winter's photos. This image appears to be *of* nothing, or if something, simply an empty room – a more-blunt because less-considered document. Perhaps the built in cabinetry in the back right corner has already been dismantled for preservation, or maybe it is still there – I can't see it. The photographer leaves the clothes hangers strewn across the floor, final remnants of the building's days as a boy's dormitory for the Darrow School.

Today the "Shaker Retiring Room" looks like Shaker interiors appearing in the most prized histories of Shaker furniture. Cheek's photograph inscribes the "Shaker Retiring Room" into privileged lineage of Shaker historiography and documentation, and its capacity to *look right* (however artificial), along with the continued belief in the transparency of documents supports this room's indexical status, and legitimates the proximity of new construction and old photograph. However, the simple observation of this correspondence can, in the end, be taken as both legitimization *and* disqualification. This photographic correspondence both indicates success in 1981, and also exposes that success or accuracy is determined in large part through a visual-historiographical alignment.

Giedion's portrayal of the Shakers might also offer alternative paths for the analysis of Shaker architecture, and provides us with some focus in this accounting of the Shaker room. Giedion argues that, beyond being unburdened by a history of ornament, "this period [of

American development] has a particular significance to foreign eyes,” because “the new forms which grew up in it had their roots in an organization of labor altogether different from that which prevails in Europe.” He continues that “in America materials were plentiful and skilled labor scarce; in Europe skilled labor was plentiful and materials scarce.” The labor history of Shaker communities is an undercurrent in Shaker studies that could provide architectural history an exciting opportunity.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, in *Sticks and Stones*, Mumford warns that formal analysis outside of social and political forms of organization are futile, that the social-esthetic relationship” are two halves of “a fundamental doctrine.”<sup>72</sup> Chapter three will pursue an architectural history of the Shaker room directed in this way toward the social-aesthetic relationship in the Shaker’s labor practice.

In the end, the significance of commissioning a black and white photograph is not so much the way in which the particular character of the room’s documentation inserts it into a given history and adopts that narrative, its priorities, and its values (although this is important to acknowledge). Rather, the significance lies in the fact that a documentation strategy and the format of the resulting document appears to be more impactful on the meaning and interpretation of the room than the material, the work, or the fictions that went into it. I have argued that, from the perspective of Cheek’s 1981 photograph, the American Wing curators built the Shaker room as it is in order to facilitate a visual correspondence between their new period room and a particular Shaker narrative typified by Winter’s photographs of the Shakers from the 1930s. Had

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<sup>71</sup> Giedion, *Space, Time, & Architecture*, 1967, 336, 346. See also Lewis Mumford’s *Sticks and Stones*, 4, 10 for reference to the Shakers and the need to situate formal analysis within the social and political context of its production.

<sup>72</sup> See Mumford, *Sticks and Stones*, 1955, “Preface to the Dover Edition,” ix. Here, Mumford explains to the reader the many contributions of his book. The last and “greatest contribution” he mentions concerns “the fact that I sought to relate individual structures to their urban site or their setting in the rural landscape: thus I turned my back upon the habit of treating the building as a self-sufficient entity, an esthetic abstraction.”

the room appeared in such a way that this photograph could not have been taken, or in such a way that the documentary photograph did not look familiar, then the “Shaker Retiring Room” would mean something else entirely; or, perhaps, it would have been deemed inaccurate or a failed attempt: bad research.<sup>73</sup>

If questions of the relative accuracy of the room are less important than the questions concerning the application of documentary technology; and if this technology simultaneously poses some questions while it obscures other, then how are we to look at this black and white photograph?<sup>74</sup> When the interpretation of a work of architecture takes its documents and their relative efficacy as the central problem and asks, for instance, whether or not Cheek’s photograph accurately depicts the Shakers, one has already presumed too much about the object of analysis and set the parameters by which it can have significance for the history of architecture. That is, the Shaker period room becomes significant only insofar as it accurately responds to the questions the premise can pose, while discarding all else.

While this is a fairly obvious observation, once acknowledged, it begs the question what else about this Shaker period room might be significant to architectural history aside from its apparent correspondence with Modern architecture. Nicoletta sought to revise the historiography of Shaker architecture by aligning its development with nineteenth-century reform movements via a close analysis of individual Shaker’s experiences of the dwelling houses of Mount Lebanon. When Nicoletta turned to the Shaker period room, she viewed it in the same way that

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<sup>73</sup> Ian Hacking comments on these kinds of entwined arguments: “What the proposition means depends upon the ways in which we might settle its truth. That innocent observation verges nervously on circularity.” This here suggests that, for the Shaker period room, accuracy simply equals correspondence with specific evidence. See Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance*, Ideas in Context (Book 17), 1<sup>st</sup> edition (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.7.

<sup>74</sup> Here again refer to the discussion of Mitchell and misrepresentation versus ideological production introduced in the introduction.

others had thought of Winter's photographs: potentially inaccurate depictions privileging a Modernist aesthetic. In this vein, Nicoletta claims that "the architectural details [of the PMA room] provide a window into how such rooms once appeared, as well as how they have been interpreted in the twentieth century."<sup>75</sup> This marks a divergence from her earlier method. Where Nicoletta now focuses on the accuracy of a representation, I intend to extend her prior focus on first-hand accounts of the North Family Dwelling by attempting to reconstruct (as Carol Duncan might have) the experiences, expertise, and commitments of those who labored in the "Shaker Retiring Room" itself. Rather than treating the Shaker room as a window to look *through*, I will look directly *at* this technology of representation and ask whose labor it is. In the following chapter, the debate about the meaning of the Shaker room is set aside and a second document with an entirely different form leads to another Shaker Retiring Room. This room is invisible in the Cheek photograph, and it is defined by the process of building it into the American Wing.

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<sup>75</sup> Nicoletta, "Sisters' Retiring Room," E42.



### 3. REPRODUCING ANOTHER SHAKER ROOM

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“The American Wing aims to be not an architectural history but an autobiography.”

~ Grosvenor Atterbury

#### 3.1. “*Items from Shaker Bldg., New Lebanon*”

The 1960s and 70s saw a rebirth of interest in the United Society of Believers paving the way to the induction of the Shakers into the American Wing.<sup>1</sup> While collectors, antiquarians, and museums began to seek out and pay unprecedented and growing sums for authentic Shaker furniture, the American counter-culture also turned toward the Shakers, focusing instead on their social and political innovations as a native example of a “successful” communitarian utopia.<sup>2</sup> In

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Epigraph: Atterbury, Grosvenor, *Opening Addresses* 1925, p.17.

<sup>1</sup> During this time, many books written on and by the Shakers were returned to print. In the foreword to one such republication, the Shakers from the community in Canterbury, New Hampshire give their impression of this resurgence on January 27, 1976: “yet never before has the Shaker story received more attention than in the last decade. Four Shaker villages have become historical shrines. Shaker furniture, arts, and crafts have received both national and international attention. Numerous books have been published; articles have appeared in papers and periodicals; and a number of documentary films have been made. So the movement that was once only a glowing ember has been fanned anew; the United Society of Believer’s in Christ’s Second Appearing have again become an influence in American utopian thought.” Charles Edson Robinson, *The Shakers and Their Homes: A Concise History of The United Society of Believers*, facsimile (Canterbury, New Hampshire: Shaker Village, Inc. in collaboration with New Hampshire Publishing Company, [1893] 1976), np. Consider, for instance, that in 1960 the last remaining Shaker trustee of the Hancock Shaker Village sold the property and buildings to Shaker Community, Inc., a non-profit organization now running the *Hancock Shaker Village, the living history museum*; and, in 1968, a former director of Colonial Williamsburg purchased the Pleasant Hill Shaker Village to establish *Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill*.

<sup>2</sup> For interest in Shakers as a native example of communal utopias see Donna Lawson, *Brothers and Sisters All over This Land: America’s First Communes*, (New York; Washington; London: Praeger Publishers, 1972); Keith Melville, *Communes in the Counter Culture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life*, (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1972), pp.34-51. Laurence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Counter-Cultures in America*, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1973) sets the Shakers (and other canonical “radical” utopias) aside for less common examples, only giving three marginal references to the Shakers throughout the book. Nevertheless, Veysey provides great insight into counter-cultural reasoning surrounding utopian communities. Much more recently, see the exhibition “Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia.” Although the Shakers are not mentioned in the exhibition or the accompanying article (which I find surprising), this clearly indicates the general landscape of interests (tied closely to avant-garde architectural practices) for which the Shakers offered a potent and long-standing example. Further note the extension of Modernist caché to normalize yet another formerly radical movement. See “Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia,” Walker Art Center with the Berkeley Art

an unpublished manuscript filed away by the American Wing, then Assistant Curator of American Domestic Arts Amelia Peck explained public perception of the museum which led to the first acquisitions of Shaker furniture and artefacts:

In the 1960s, there was a feeling that the American Wing had grown static – – that we were exploring only high style furniture and painting. Shaker furniture was just becoming popular – – auction prices were beginning to rise and the staff felt that Shaker furniture would be a breath of fresh air in the galleries – – indeed, *an almost radical look* amidst the Chippendale highboys and Queen Anne chairs.<sup>3</sup>

Significantly, this shows that the American Wing inducted the Shakers into their developmental narrative of American domestic interiors in large part due to the context of auction prices, the perception of current museum display pieces by the public, and the “almost radical” aspect of Shaker furniture when seen alongside well-established, “static” masterworks. The document in which this explanation appears is unsurprisingly titled “Shaker Furniture,” and was written as an “acoustiguide” most likely as part of the MMA’s introduction of a “Study Center” with a hands-on focus toward the appreciation of American furniture masterpieces, although it was never recorded or released.<sup>4</sup> In this explanation, the American Wing’s acquisition of Shaker artefacts

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Museum/Pacific Film Archive, (curator) Andrew Blauvelt, (October 24, 2015 – February 28, 2016); Greg Castillo, “Hippie Modernism: How Bay Area design radicals tried to save the planet,” *Places Journal*, (October 26, 2015), published in coordination with Walker Art Center, <https://placesjournal.org/article/hippie-modernism/> (Accessed 21 November 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Metropolitan Museum of Art, “Shaker Furniture,” Acoustiguide Script, Production #: [blank], Narrator: Amelia Peck, (October 24, 1985). Ms. in Shake Folders, AWSF (emphasis added; see Appendix B). Includes note appended at a later date: “This acoustiguide was never made, Probably for opening of Study Center. A[melia] P[eck] – 1998.” Henceforth, Peck is referred to as the author of this text for sake of brevity, and given the manuscript in the archive has been edited, annotated, and in part rewritten in Peck’s hand throughout. However, this text may well have been the product of more than one author.

<sup>4</sup> [Peck, Amelia] MMA, “Shaker Furniture,” (October 1985 & 1998), p.10. Peck gives a further, more personal explanation for the prominent (insofar as building a permanent period room is prominent) inclusion of Shakers in the American Wing. Reinforcing that the Shakers fit into modern trends as furniture makers, Peck explains that the increasing mobility of post-war American society “became interested in easily-moveable (simple, strong, and light weight) furniture,” and that “many industrial designers” were turning to the Shakers for inspiration on this front. “I’ve always felt,” she concludes, “that the rise of Shaker popularity coincided perfectly with this trend.” (p.17).

seems to be more concerned with public interests and the perception of the museum than art historical relevance.<sup>5</sup>

By the mid 1970s, what would later be called “the Shaker Surge” reached its apogee.<sup>6</sup> Building on this public momentum, the curators sought to produce a permanent Shaker display through which to exhibit their prime Shaker acquisitions. Given that any permanent addition to the American Wing would necessarily modify its official narrative, inserting the Shakers amounts to canonization. Catalyzed further perhaps by the American Wing’s plans for the approaching U.S. bicentennial, Heckscher traveled to New Lebanon, New York, a town roughly forty minutes driving distance outside of Albany, in order to attend the auction of an entire Shaker building at the nearby Mount Lebanon Shaker community.<sup>7</sup> Mount Lebanon had been the spiritual and governmental center of Shakerism in the nineteenth century, and remains today the

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<sup>5</sup> These acquisitions (as well as a hands-on study center referenced in the archive) corresponded to an incipient Populism that was consistent with the do-it-yourself mentality undergirding counter-cultural investments into Shaker studies. Given the dire financial conditions of the MMA in the late 1950s and 60s, perhaps hiring Thomas Hoving as the new Director of the MMA (1959-1977) catalyzed the drive to actively engage with public interest. This may also have contributed to the decision to build more period rooms – a technology formalized with the construction of the American Wing in 1924 during the last rise of American populism. Incidentally, the American Wing’s recent acquisition of the “Worsham-Rockefeller Dressing Room” (Gallery 742) in late 2015 seems to mark yet one more rise in populism following the 2012 and 2016 presidential races in the United States. More research would be required to adequately argue for such a correspondence. Here, it remains a suggestive observation for the museum’s responsiveness to changing political landscapes.

<sup>6</sup> [Author Unknown], “The Shaker Surge,” *Colonial Homes* (March-April 1982):118, 119, 123, 188 (incomplete copy of article held in The Amy Bess and Lawrence K. Miller Library, Hancock Shaker Village, hereafter HSVA). The article states: “Shaker design is flourishing – it has now become an important part of the American artistic lexicon” (119). However, by this time, the focus on all things Shaker was on the ebb. Google’s “ngram” viewer graphs the number of times the word “Shakers” appears in the full range of digitized information it has available from newspapers, books, scholarly articles and more. The graph produced demonstrates the significant spike in the use of the word “Shaker” in published materials accelerating rapidly from 1968 to its height in 1974. By 1983 the number of mentions returned to levels slightly elevated from those of the 1960s. See <https://books.google.com/ngrams> Search term: Shaker. Date Range: 1960 to 1990. With Smoothing of: 1. Accessed 24 August 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Mount Lebanon is also referred to as New Lebanon in literature on/by the Shakers, the former name of the village. The Shaker community had become prosperous enough that on 17 August 1861 a Federal post-office station opened in the Shaker village necessitating a differentiation from the nearby non-Shaker town. Henceforth, this Shaker community has been known as Mount Lebanon. For a brief account of the first century of Mount Lebanon history see Robinson, C.E., *The Shakers and Their Homes* (1976), pp.36-48.

most well-known Shaker site. Since 1932, however, Mount Lebanon has been owned and inhabited by the Darrow School, a private preparatory school.<sup>8</sup> The auction was to be held on 2 August 1972, one more in a long series of sales necessary to raise funds for the survival of the school (Figure 3.1).<sup>9</sup>

Having successfully purchased at auction the rights to lot “B2,” a room in the North Family Dwelling of Mount Lebanon, as well as one flight of a staircase in the hallway just outside the room, curator Heckscher prepared a list of the acquisitions. This list, as with the Cheek photograph before, documents the “Shaker Retiring Room” allowing for its later reproduction (Figure 3.2). Transported to New York City shortly after purchase, these wooden parts of a Shaker room and staircase would eventually help form an environment for other “original” Shaker artefacts already held by the museum. To the American Wing’s current collection of wooden stands, rocking chairs, and oval boxes (among other objects), Heckscher was adding transom frames, baseboards, built-in drawers, balustrades, and other such architectural elements (Figure 3.3).<sup>10</sup> The American Wing dismantled a second floor, interior

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<sup>8</sup> The Darrow School opened in 1932 as the Lebanon School for Boys, later changing its name in 1939 to reflect the original owner of the land, George Darrow. The School’s website includes a section titled “Our Shaker Past and How it’s Still Alive.” In this and other sections, Darrow integrates Shaker values into their mission statement and institutional identity offering an unexpected legacy for Mount Lebanon Shakers. See The Darrow School, “Mission, History & Values,” Accessed 10 August 2016. <http://www.darrow-school.org/Darrow-Difference/Darrow-Values>. HSVA includes numerous pamphlets collected from the Darrow School since the 1940s, as well as further information on the school’s namesake, George Darrow, who helped found the Mount Lebanon Shaker Community with the donation of his land and buildings when he became a Shaker Brother in the late eighteenth century.

<sup>9</sup> Though it may seem callous to some, selling off Shaker artefacts bit by bit in order to fund the educational, social, or political agenda of the Darrow School manifests (rather than denigrates) the spirit of Shakerism far more accurately than the ossification of their remains. The Shaker themselves did as much in their later years, selling off vast tracks of land (the source of most Shaker wealth by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) to finance the remaining communities.

<sup>10</sup> Sewing Table (MMA Accession #66.10.18, date 1843); Work Table (#66.10.17, 1820-1850); Rocking Chair (#66.10.23, 1820-1850); Oval Box (#66.10.36a, b, 1800-1900), and now “Architectural elements from North Family Dwelling, New Lebanon, New York” (#1972.187.1, 1830-1840). Note that the majority of the Shaker artefacts in the American Wing were accessioned in 1966; more on the significance of this later. Note that the “Shaker Retiring Room” is not literally, the interior shell of a room packaged and hauled to Manhattan in one, complete piece, as

domestic room; an act of transformation which indicates the room was also re-conceptualized from a singular entity (Lot “B2” in 1972, “Sister Murella Gallup” in 1940 as it is named on the HABS drawing), and into a series of individual objects described, numbered, and listed. Before filing it away with all the other papers, Heckscher uses a blue ball-point pen to add a title, a date, and an action completed, “delivered to 158<sup>th</sup> st.,” and then subjoining his initials to this hastily penciled list of “items.” Heckscher’s signature indicates for the file that he is the author of this document. In so doing he constitutes these wooden pieces of the North Family Dwelling as institutionally recognized bits of American architectural “heritage.”

Ultimately, this list is another form of architectural representation. The discussion surrounding architectural representation tends to exclude “documents” as such by considering architectural representation as somehow unique and distinguishable from other forms of representation, or those made by non-architects.<sup>11</sup> This may well be the case. However, after briefly recasting some of these scholar’s claims, here I will be reading documents like Heckscher’s list as an architectural drawing. The list, in fact, bears a strong resemblance to the numerical tables illuminated by Mario Carpo as another mode of architectural representation. But, Carpo’s focus concerns “the making of identical copies—of nature, art, objects, and media of all sorts.”<sup>12</sup> Heckscher’s list, on the other hand, is not concerned with replication or identical

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historic buildings are sometimes moved from one city lot to another without dismantling the building in its entirety. Before the items on Heckscher’s list could be transported, lot “B2” had to disappear.

<sup>11</sup> See Mario Carpo, *The Alphabet and the Algorithm*, Writing Architecture series, (ed) Cynthia Davidson, (Cambridge, MA & London, England: The MIT Press, 2011); Dalibor Vesely, *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation: The Question of Creativity in the Shadow of Production* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006); Alberto Perez-Gomez, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000); Robin Evans, *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays* (London: Architectural Association, 1997); Robin Evans, *The Projective Cast: Architecture and Its Three Geometries* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000); and more recently, Pari Riahi, *Ars et Ingenium: The Embodiment of Imagination in Francesco di Giorgio Martini’s Drawings*, Routledge Research in Architecture series (London & New York: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> Carpo, *The Alphabet and the Algorithm*, ix.

copies, but rather, I argue, with material presence, object formation, and trust. Cornelia Vismann's media theoretical analysis of files offers energizing insight into the analysis of architectural representation. "[T]he individual items are not put down in writing for the sake of memorizing spoken words," Vismann states about the making and use of lists, "but in order to regulate goods, things, or people. Lists sort and engender circulation. ... Items that would be completely uncoordinated without such a list are momentarily called to order."<sup>13</sup> My analysis of Heckscher's list, then, seeks to demonstrate the parameters of the list as opposed to those of the photographs discussed in the preceding chapter. I follow Robin Evans when he argues that the form of representation one chooses to employ (whether it be perspective drawing, coordinated plans, or a "developed surface") actively participates in the imaginative production of what follows this act of representation. In other words, each form of representation suggests certain paths forward, while it impedes others.<sup>14</sup>

In place of either survey drawings or photographic evidence, the list embodies an alternative conception of the Shaker room.<sup>15</sup> The period room of this list is not an armature built to produce a documentary photograph, and it remains entirely unconcerned with what the room does or does not look like. Instead, this list suggests that we focus on a series of objects in circulation. And also, significantly, on the labor it calls to order. Initially, Heckscher's list distinguishes a new set of objects by transforming an interior room into a collection of


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<sup>13</sup> For more on the list-form of representation see Cornelia Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology*, (trans.) Geoffrey Winthrop-Young (Stanford University Press, 2008). Find further commentary on Vismann above in Section 1.4. Vismann, *Files*, p.7.

<sup>14</sup> Robin Evans, "The Developed Surface: An Enquiry into the Brief Life of an Eighteenth-Century Drawing Technique," in *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays* (London: Architectural Association, 1997), pp. 194-231.

<sup>15</sup> AWSF contains a series of both survey drawings of the North Family Dwelling collected and produced on behalf of the American Wing, and plan sketches of the new American Wing testing out different configurations of gallery spaces during the design process. Refer to Appendix B.

**Figure 3.1.** "Auction Sale," flier announcing Darrow School Auction on 2 August 1972. AWSF. (Appendix B: Folder D:33)



**LEBANON VALLEY AUCTION GALLERY**  
(Across from Showboat)  
Rt 20-22 New Lebanon, New York  
GENERAL AND ANTIQUE AUCTION


**ANTIQU & GENERAL AUCTION**  
LEBANON VALLEY AUCTION GALLERY, Rt 20-22, New Lebanon, NY  
August 2, 1972      Preview 6:30 PM      Auction 7:30 PM

**Furniture:** Pie Crust, Tilt top Table, Walnut towel rack, Child's pine youth chair, Oak, music cabinet, Pine kitchen table, Flat-Form rockers, Oak love seat, Pine night stand with drawer, Oak plank seat kitchen chairs, Victorian couch, Oak high back office chair, Oak round table, Spool beds, 1900 Wooden washing machine, Early school desk, 2 Oak Larkin desks, Boston Rocker, 3 Slat back chairs, Marble Top Stand, SHAKER Straight Chair, SHAKER No 3 Rocker, SHAKER Clothes Dryer, Shaker Bottle & Baskets.

**Misc.:** Daggaratypes, Dishware, Glassware including Cut Glass, Chocolate set, Depression and much more. Brass Bed, Cash Register, Westminster Chime Clock, Nic-nac shelf, Old desk lamp, (with green shade) Lamps, Old hanging carbide store lamps.

**Collectors Items:** Shirley Temple Doll, Foreign country dolls, Childs set of English Staffordshire dishes, , Minature Doll Dresser, Minature Doll Deacons bench, Old trains, Old Toys etc.

Good Consignments wanted for our Wed Night Auctions.  
Refreshments on Premises.

**AUCTION SALE**  **AUCTION SALE**



**Figure 3.2.** "Items from Shaker Bldg., New Lebanon," M[orison] H[.] H[eckscher], 3 November 1972, AWSF. List of Shaker artefacts in pencil and blue ball-point pen on lined notebook paper. (Appendix B: Folder A: 11.1)

Items from Shaker Bldg., New Lebanon  
delivered to 158<sup>th</sup> St - 11/3/72

Back boards to built-in cupboard - 4 pcs.  
Shin wood (2)  
Window sash - 6 exterior.  
" Trans. + frame.  
" (1)  
Transom piece (2)  
Ply board - bundle - 24 (15)  
Sole flooring board  
Total window + frame.  
Cedar box  
Baseboard - bundle (3) / loose piece (5).  
door frame - " (2)  
Stair Railings: 34

balusters - 26 bundles  
~~balusters~~  
Newels - 2  
Newel + outside stringer  
Dormer - 2  
Door frame 2 (intact)  
Window frames (3)  
built-in cabinet + 8 drawers

M H H



**Figure 3.3.** Transcript prepared by author of “Items from Shaker Bldg., New Lebanon” (Figure 3.2). Brackets indicate unclear text in original document.

### Items from Shaker Bldg., New Lebanon

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delivered to 158<sup>th</sup> St. – 11/3/72

Back board to built in cupboard – 4 pec.

Stair tread (2)

St. Window sash – 6 exterior .

” Transom [~~ed~~—frame] .

” ” (1)

Transom frame (2)

Pegboard - bundles 22 c(15)

S[- -]ple floor board

Interior window and frame

[C]inder box

Baseboard – bundles (3) / loose pieces (5) .

door frames — ” (2)

Stair Railings : 3 4

balusters – 2 6 bundles

~~balusters~~

Newels – 2 2

Newel + outside stringer

Doors – 2

Door frame 2 (intact)

Window frames (3)

built-in cabinet + 8 drawers

M H H

“items” now distinct from the rest of the North Family Dwelling; the list identifies and isolates valuable architectural heritage (from the valueless and/or the useless) for its purchase, disassembly, and transportation.<sup>16</sup> Once in Manhattan many of these items are later used to construct a new object in the form of a period room. Even after these two transformations (from old room to list, and from list into new room), the list continues to play an active role in the constitution of this period room as the “Shaker Retiring Room.” While it is now the room (rather than the document) that solicits action from onlookers and engenders a new kind of circulation, the list becomes a source authorization archived in the American Wing’s files. There it guarantees the “original” room’s credibility by ensuring the provenance of these “architectural elements,” and by allowing the American Wing to confidently invoke this newly constructed room as authentic Shaker space.

### ***3.2. Reliable Documentation***

In another unpublished manuscript found in the Shaker folders, Kjeld Tidemand-Johannessen, an intern in the museum’s object conservation department working on the Shaker room, narrates an exclamation worthy situation.<sup>17</sup> Having just purchased the room in the Shaker dwelling house, Heckscher hired Charles Caffall and Peter Markett, two hobbyists become entrepreneurs turning out reproduction Shaker furniture for reasonable prices to populate homes

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<sup>16</sup> Presumably, Heckscher purchased the rights to the room and then produced the list to document the individual pieces that would be delivered to New York City. As the title suggests, these are Shaker items “from” a Shaker building, not “for” the “Shaker Retiring Room”; it documents origins not futures. The AWSF contain but do not discuss this list, and as such, the order of events cannot be determined here precisely.

<sup>17</sup> Tidemand-Johannessen, Kjeld, “Every Force Evolves a Form: The installation of the Shaker Retiring Room at the Metropolitan Museum of Art,” (Columbia University, December 10, 1981). Unpublished ms., AWSF. It appears to be an essay for a course (“American Domestic Arts A6732”) at Columbia University Tidemand-Johannessen wrote based on his internship at the MMA.

in the Berkshires.<sup>18</sup> Caffall and Markett, who called themselves the North Family Joiners, were to use their knowledge of Shaker woodworking to dismantle lot “B2” along with one full flight of the staircase in the hallway, and then transport them to the American Wing’s storage facility, then on 158<sup>th</sup> street in Manhattan. The two men were more than happy to oblige as they were also employed by the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) to dismantle and transport lot “A2,” the room just across the hall, purchased the same day for another Shaker period room (Figure 3.4).<sup>19</sup> Tidemand-Johannessen:

Unfortunately, in the great haste that followed the purchase, no photographic record was made before or during the disassembly; subsequently the only reliable documentation for the reconstruction resided in curatorial memories and the Historic American Buildings Survey drawings of the original building.<sup>20</sup>

Apparently, neither the North Family Joiners, nor any other employee of the American Wing saw fit to document the “original” retiring room *in situ* before they located and extracted the various items Heckscher had requested. Was this a simple oversight? Did documenting the room as it stood in 1972 not seem necessary, or perhaps not relevant to a Shaker period room? More interestingly, Tideman-Johannessen emphasizes that very little “reliable documentation” remained for the reconstruction due to what he considers an unfortunate mistake. But, what makes a document reliable? What is it about “curatorial memories” or HABS drawings that qualifies them for such significance in the reconstruction of an historical room?

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<sup>18</sup> After meeting in New York City, Charles Caffall and Peter Markett [Murkett] moved to Barrington, Massachusetts and founded the North Family Joiners. Today, at least Murkett continues to build and sell furniture through his company “New England Modern.” More information is available on their website: <http://www.newenglandmodern.com>

<sup>19</sup> A comparison of these two Shaker period rooms that formerly stood across the hall from one another, and the process leading to their parallel production fell beyond the scope of this thesis, but would nevertheless be valuable. The PMA room (Figure 2.13) opened five years prior to the Shaker room in the MMA, and it emphasized many of the same consultants.

<sup>20</sup> Tidemand-Johannessen 1981: p.6.

It is unclear how much this intern could really have known about the development of the Shaker room or the various documents produced of lot “B2” on behalf of the American Wing. But, if we are to believe his diagnosis, then what are to make of the color photographs discussed in the previous chapter (Figure 2.19-21) or the sketch surveying the retiring room’s built-in cabinetry that survives on the backside of a Darrow School Auction flier (Figure 3.5) both archived by the American Wing? Are these *un-reliable* documents?<sup>21</sup> Three photographs, a drawing, and a list may well be the sole documents produced by the American Wing of Lot “B2” before the North Family Dwelling was entirely demolished.<sup>22</sup> What else remains from the time spent at the North Family Dwelling? Despite what may seem to be Tidemand-Johannessen’s novice impression (though I do not think it is) that the room is an amalgam of memories from recent experiences and the lack of “reliable” documentation, Assistant Curator Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, writes confidently in *The Shaker Messenger* that the “retiring room will be installed as nearly as possible exactly as it had been on the second floor of the of the North Family Dwelling.” And further, “the installation will be presented as an accurate period interior dating before 1850.”<sup>23</sup> What relates “reliable” documents to accurate reproduction? Does a reproduction developed from unreliable documents lead to an inaccurate reconstruction?

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<sup>21</sup> In fact, the Auction announcement flier perhaps *only* survives because of what looks like an impromptu survey sketch of some of the built-in cabinetry within Lot “B2,” parts of which here detailed are later itemized in Heckscher’s list. Perhaps this drawing is even made by Heckscher himself, although the document does not seem penned by the same hand, nor does it include the “MHH” present on so many other archival documents.

<sup>22</sup> There does not seem to be a way to identify which documents derive from the auction day within the AWSF. The color photos are undated and unattributed. Similarly, the numerous other survey sketches and photographs are either from unknown authors and dates, or not documenting Lot “B2.”

<sup>23</sup> This statement appeared in *The Shaker Messenger*, a publication produced and distributed by the sole active Shaker community (then and today). This suggests that Frelinghuysen’s intended her statement specifically for the Shaker Studies community and, in particular, for the remaining Shakers themselves perhaps with the hope of their approval of the American Wing’s depiction of our/their forbears. Further, in a page of this article *not* included in the partial copy with AWSF, Frelinghuysen qualifies this seemingly straightforward claim: “The retiring room, where Sister Murella Gallup (sometimes spelled Mozella Gallup) and her predecessors slept and meditated, will be furnished with *choice examples of Shaker craftsmanship from the Museum’s collection*. ... [T]he furnishings reflect

Numerous survey drawings and photographs of lot “A2” and other parts of the North Family Dwelling produced on behalf of the PMA exist and are held within the AWSF. Some eleven HABS drawings offer a thorough description of the North Family Dwelling in plan, section, elevation, and detail; along with their many photographs along with those of the *Index*. There are also a host of first-hand historical accounts of the North Family Dwelling which remain from across the years.<sup>24</sup> Although it may seem substantial, there is surprisingly little documentation on so prominent a dwelling house; and very little regarding its construction or design.

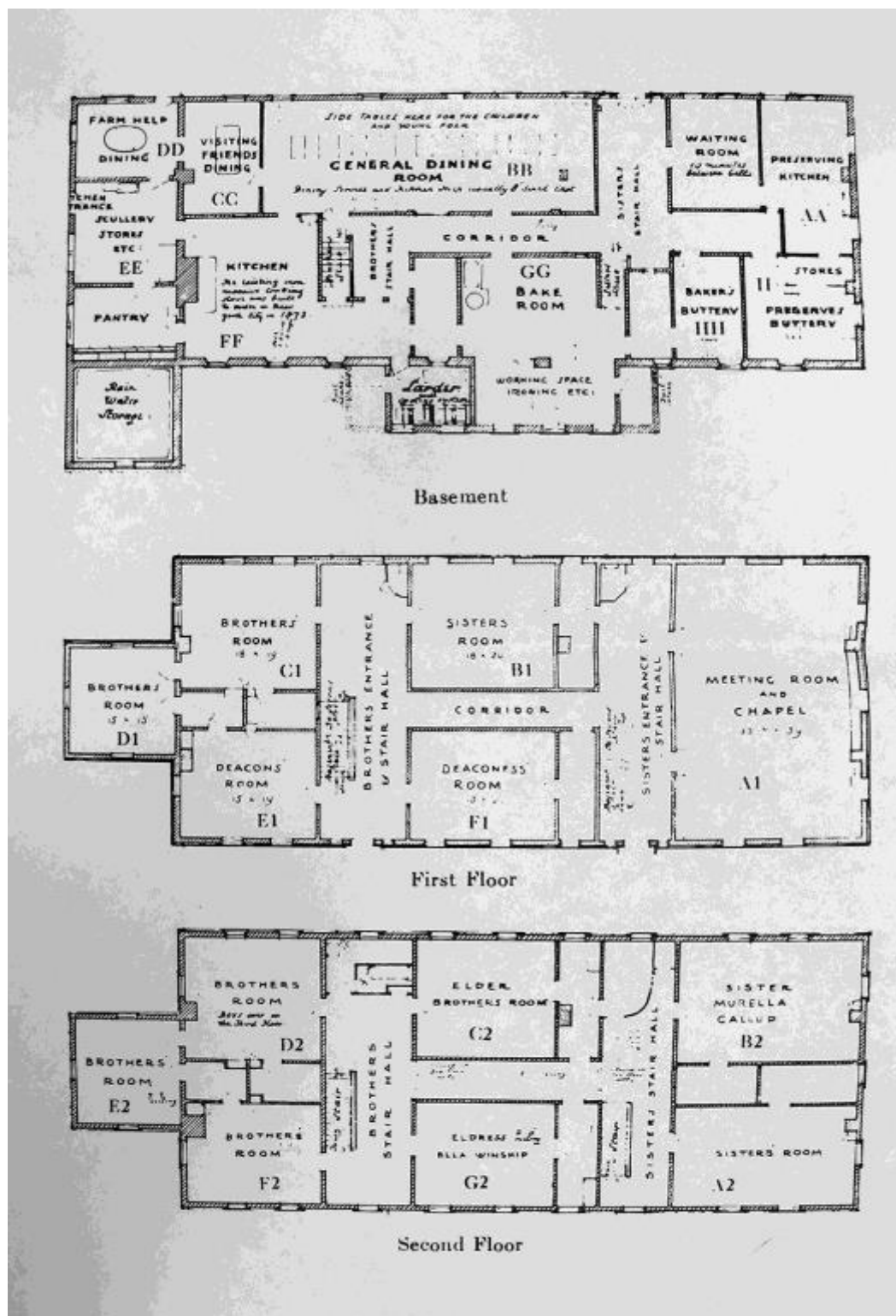
Ultimately, how important are survey drawings or on site demolition photos for a “nearly as possible exactly as it has been” reconstruction of a room dismantled and trucked hundreds of miles? To answer this question, I will turn to a situation that might be said to embody the ideal kind of documentation for period room production: enter the much celebrated Francis W. Little room of 1912-15 designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. During the expansion of the American Wing beginning in the 1960s, the narrative of the American Wing also grew, choosing to extend its collections formerly concluding in the early nineteenth century, and now extending from 1680 up to 1916. “We wanted to continue chronologically with the historical interiors when we expanded,” Heckscher explains, “so I was on the lookout for major figures to represent

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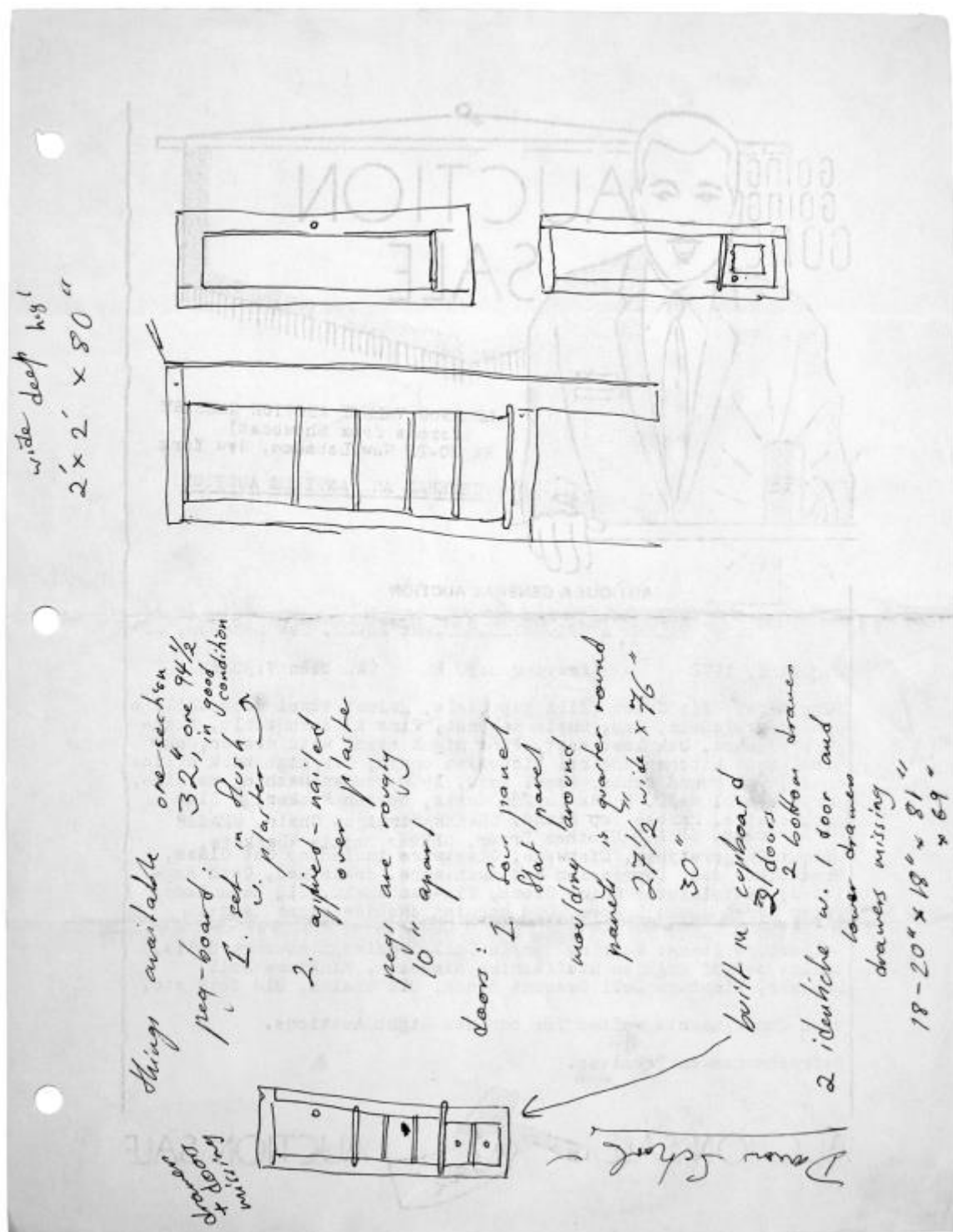
as accurately as possible the functions of the room – sleep, small handiwork and meditation prior to evening worship” (emphasis added). Here it is unclear whether the period room will be a precise depiction of a Shaker Sister’s room, a means for displaying “choice examples” of Shaker craftsmanship, or an accurate communication of room “function.” Can these occur simultaneously? Regarding the documentation employed to produce the room, Frelinghuysen writes that it “was gleaned from instructions written in the *Millennial Laws*, print sources, 19<sup>th</sup>-century photographs as well as the furniture itself.” Note that none of the sources mentioned here are produced by the American Wing. Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, “Metropolitan Opens Shaker Room,” *The Shaker Messenger* (date unknown): 9. Photocopy of page 9 found in AWSF. For more commentary and further quotes from this article see also Bowe and Richmond, *Selling Shaker*, 135n147.

<sup>24</sup> By pairing HABS drawings with first-hand accounts, Nicoletta wrote her dissertation based on individual accounts of the experience of this building. Julie Nicoletta, “Structures for Communal Life: Shaker Dwelling Houses at Mount Lebanon, New York,” (Ph.D., Yale University, 1993).

**Figure 3.4.** Annotated Floor plans of North Family Dwelling from Darrow Auction pamphlet (modified versions of HABS drawings), c.1972, AWSF. (Appendix B: Folder A: 2)



**Figure 3.5.** Author Unknown (possibly M. H. Heckscher), Survey Drawing on back (verso) of "Auction Sale" flier announcing Darrow School Auction on August 2, 1972, AWSF. (Appendix B: Folder D: 33)



twentieth-century American architecture. A great opportunity presented itself in 1972.”<sup>25</sup> Taken from an interview with Danny Danziger in 2007, Heckscher continues to explain circumstances in which he was able to acquire the Francis W. Little house in its entirety from its then owners and inhabitants. Heckscher took two trips to Wayzata, Minnesota where the building was constructed, accompanied by museum director Thomas Hoving on the second. After sealing the deal with the family, “We headed back that night on a late flight.” Heckscher continues,

me with a brown paper shopping bag from the local supermarket, filled with architectural drawings I had found in a corner of one of the rooms, the original drawings for this house by Frank Lloyd Wright himself. It was pretty thrilling to have something like that, in many ways the most exciting acquisition one could ever have.<sup>26</sup>

Heckscher had already selected which room in the house would appear in the American Wing, and this set of original construction documents produced “by Frank Lloyd Wright himself” (even “found in a corner of one of the rooms”: authenticity via proximity) provides the authentic intent to match up with a room of “incredible light and space, and a wonderful high ceiling, and all its original furniture intact.”<sup>27</sup> Back at the American Wing, then, they not only consciously built this period room as an exact replica of an existing room down to the arrangement of furniture, light fixtures, and carpeting; but, they also were able to reconstruct the room directly to the architect’s specifications. Regardless of the extent to which these drawings were in fact employed during the re-assembly of the room within the museum (or the original building’s construction for that matter), that the American Wing possesses the original drawing set (as with Heckscher’s list) underwrites their authority and claim to authenticity. As with Cheek’s photograph, the Little

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<sup>25</sup> Danny Danziger, *Museum: Behind the Scenes at the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, NY: Viking, 2007), p.87.

<sup>26</sup> Danziger, *Museum*, 88.

<sup>27</sup> Danziger, *Museum*, 88.



room's accuracy is dependent on the extent to which it corresponds with its "authentic" referent – in this case, Wright's drawing set.

How might the Shaker room have been built were it subjected to the same level of rigor as the Frank Lloyd Wright room, and were it not "outside mainstream American art" to use MHH's phrase in a memo.<sup>28</sup> If Wright's original drawings of the Francis W. Little house can rightly be called the most faithful means of reproducing that architecture, then what is the corollary for a work of Shaker architecture? The architecture of the Shakers differs from Wright's most significantly insofar as the Shakers did not build by a detailed set of specifications, to any individual person's plan for a building, or for a client.

The Shakers did, however, employ architectural drawings of varying levels of specificity and credibility. Like many such drawings of the nineteenth century (and still today surprisingly), they were rarely dedicated to a single project. Two Shaker documents seem to be the closest analog to Wright's use of specifications: first, drawings of template cross-sections for numerous building types; and second, the *Millennial Laws*, which stipulated the particular outfitting of interior rooms (Figure 3.6).<sup>29</sup> Like most so-called vernacular architecture of the time, however, Shaker buildings grew over a number of years and were the product of numerous construction paradigms.<sup>30</sup> As such, even if the museum were to discover template drawings such as these employed in the construction of the North Family Dwelling, and reference them in the re-assembly of one of its rooms, they would provide little insight into the material composition of

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<sup>28</sup> "Morrison H. Heckscher to Berry B. Trace, "RE: New Building," Intradepartmental Memorandum (30 September 1974), AWSF.

<sup>29</sup> Unlike construction documents, the drawings contained no reference to the laws which governed them.

<sup>30</sup> For detailed information on the construction and expansion of the North Family Dwelling over the years, see Nicoletta, "Sisters' Retiring Room," 2012.

the building at large, much less this particular retiring room.<sup>31</sup> For instance, comparing a Shaker drawing of a dwelling house after its construction to these template drawings clearly demonstrates the significant modification to typical structural framing patterns (Figure 3.7).<sup>32</sup> Note the sizes of the timbers in this diagram overlaid on a Shaker drawing which carefully surveyed, drafted, and rendered a longitudinal section of an unknown Shaker dwelling house presumably following its construction. Note further the asymmetry of the structural members, which seem to specifically follow the internal loading requirements of particular programs. Arthur McLendon argues for the careful modification of structural members in collaboration with Shaker dancing practices; simply put, Shaker programming altered the size of each timber in a “typical” structural frame to fit its respective use of the room, its place in the building, and the site on which the building was placed.<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand, the American Wing does in fact refer to the *Millennial Laws* in their placard description within the room. They note, for example, that “bedsteads should be painted green—comfortables [quilts] should be of a modest color, not checked, striped, or flowered.”<sup>34</sup>

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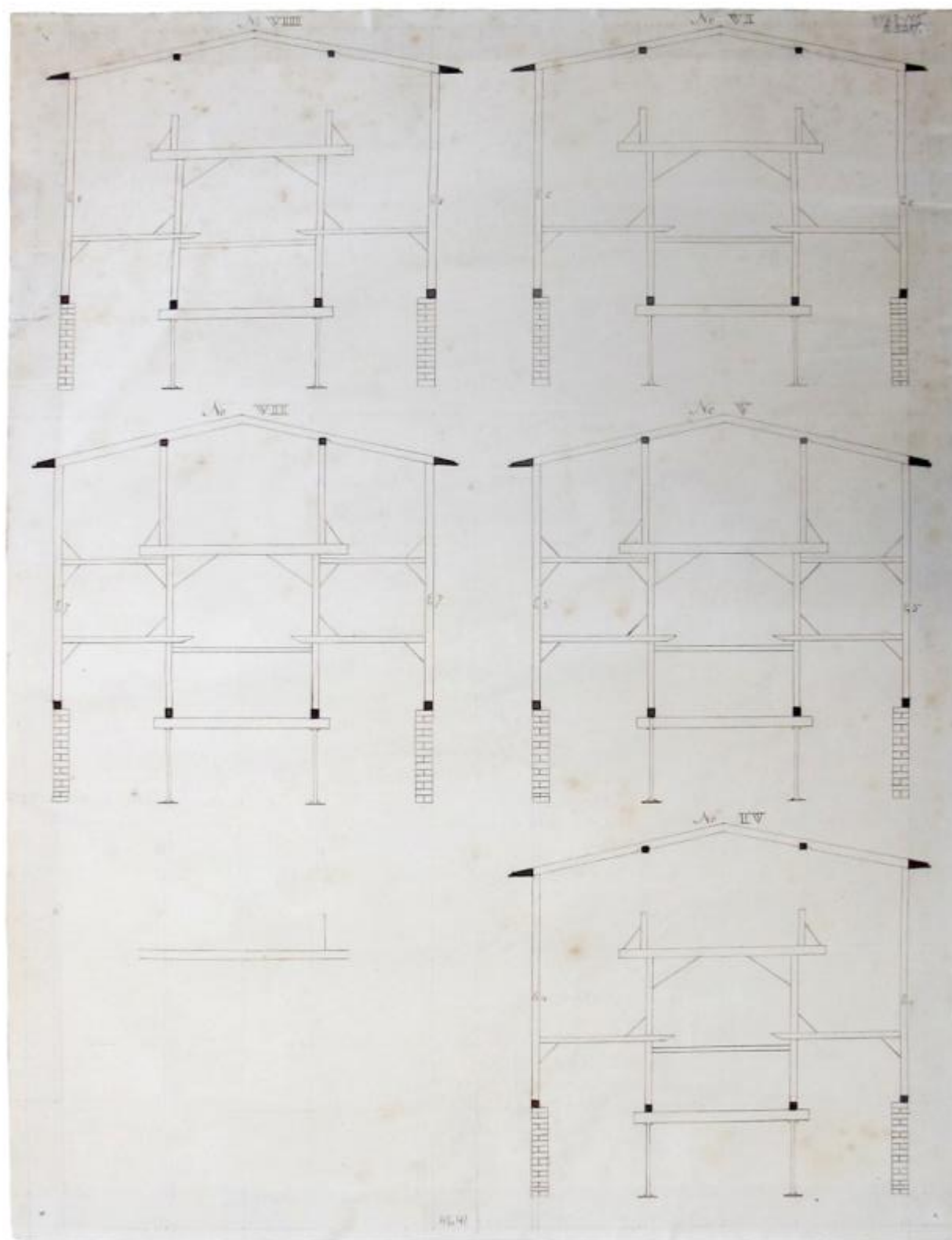
<sup>31</sup> Shaker building practice is poorly documented despite the Shaker’s mania for record keeping. For the little information there is see Andrews, *The People Called Shakers*, 94-135; *A Shaker Meeting House and its Builder*, (Hancock, MA: Shaker Community, Inc., 1962); also Lauren A. Stile, *Shaker “Great Barns” 1820s-1880s: Evolution of Shaker Dairy Barn Design and Its Relation to the Agricultural press*, Shaker Studies No.5 (Clinton, NY: Richard W. Couper Press, 2013); and Goodwillie, Christian, and Ott, John Harlow, *Hancock Shaker Village: A Guidebook and History*, (Hancock, MA: Shaker Community, Inc., 2011).

<sup>32</sup> While these structural sections and other drawings traveled between Shaker communities, this longitudinal section of a dwelling house is rooted in the dynamics of its particular place including local skills, topography, programming, and more. It should also be pointed out that these sectional drawings guide the construction of an industrial rather than a domestic structure. Despite this, however, they are here placed in comparison specifically in order to indicate their differences.

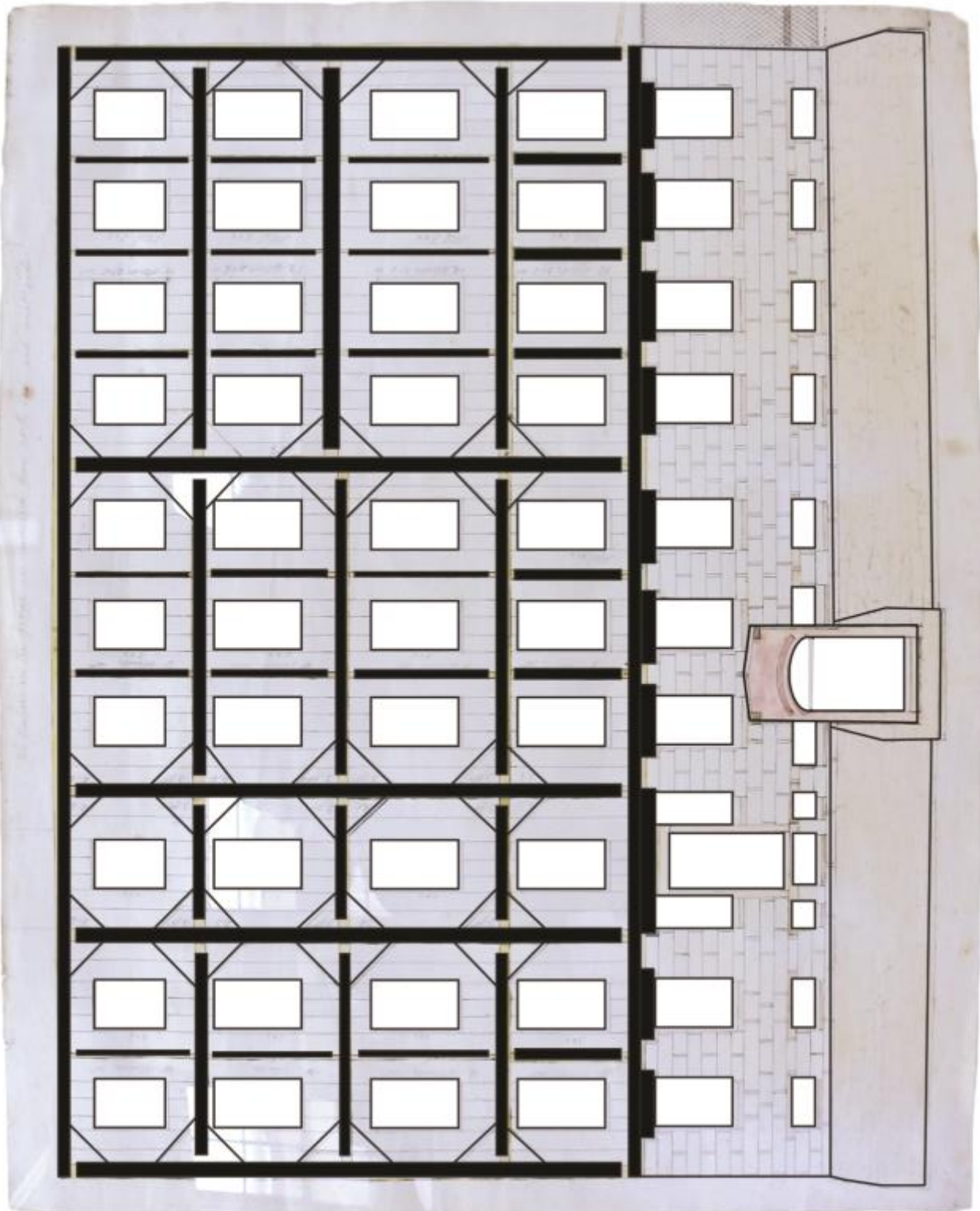
<sup>33</sup> For a more thorough analysis of the connection between the structure and program of specific buildings in relation to the Shaker practices that occupied them, see McLendon, Arthur E. “‘Ye Living Building’: Spirit, Space, and Ritual Encounter in Shaker Architecture.” (Ph.D., University of Virginia, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> Quote comes from informational placard placed on the handrail protecting the artwork (listed as 20 distinct items notably excluding all “architectural elements”) from the visitors. Placard last seen by author in Summer of 2015.

**Figure 3.6.** Unknown community, unknown designer, "Architectural drawing: cross sections (No IV-VIII) of a barn," ink, ("Portfolio") Call # 9783 S527, ID # 4641, yellow dot. HSVA.



**Figure 3.7.** Diagram showing structural members in black overlaid on Shaker drawing titled “Architectural drawing: longitudinal section of a 4 story building, with a basement,” unknown community, unknown designer, call # 9783, ID # 6492, yellow dot. HSVA. Diagram by author.



Such prescriptive specificity is typical of the *Millennial Laws*. This edict in particular derives from Part II, Section X. titled “Orders concerning Furniture in Retiring Room.”<sup>35</sup> In Section XII, “Concerning Marking Tools and Conveniences” they decree that “no one should write or print his name on any article of manufacture, that others may hereafter know the work of his hands,” and even that “no writing with red ink... may be done without liberty from the Elders.”<sup>36</sup> Despite such injunctions, most scholars and collectors have noted the varying rigor by which the *Laws* were enforced (or not) over the years and between various communities.

And yet, the construction documents employed by Shaker and non-Shaker builders to construct Shaker architecture, while they may not indicate meaningful information for the material organization of the period room, they do provide worthwhile insight into the construction process. The very fact that these drawings are meant to provide a typical layout, rather than one suited to a particular site suggests that they were not only carried between construction sites, but these drawings were consulted and then each section was modified in application. That is to say that these drawings were part of a necessary collaboration with the existing site, available material, and the builders each time they were put to use – more of a collective barn raising than a codified and professionalized set of construction documents as with Wright.<sup>37</sup> The demolished Shaker retiring room was not constructed *to* specifications, and so

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<sup>35</sup> *Millennial Laws or Gospel Statutes and Ordinances adapted to the Day of Christ's Second Appearing. Given and established in the Church for the protection thereof by Father Joseph Meacham and Mother Lucy Wright the presiding Ministry and by their Successors the Ministry and Elders. Recorded at New Lebanon Aug't 7<sup>th</sup> 1821. Revised and re-established by the Ministry and Elders Oct 1845.* Reprinted as Appendix in Andrews, *The People Called Shakers* (1963), pp. 249-289.

<sup>36</sup> Andrews 1963, 274.

<sup>37</sup> This is not to say that collaboration did not exist for Wright, or simply as part of *all* construction projects. And in part, this is exactly the point. To look at any one of these drawings as indicative of what the building ended up as after the construction process, is to take it out of context and ignore the significant impact of the construction process on the building; a fact most clear to anyone who has compared construction documents with as-built drawings. This fact is more visible with the Shakers than with Frank Lloyd Wright given their use of these templates.

could not be reconstructed *from* them either. Thus, not only were there not construction drawings to emulate when it came to the reproduction of the Shaker period room, but it seems likely that the simple replication of specifications would have avoided in spirit and effect the Shaker's construction practice; the Shaker mode of production is decidedly other than our own. So the question remains: if Wright's drawings can rightly be called the most faithful means of reproducing his architecture, then what is the corollary for a work of Shaker architecture if not a drawing?

### 3.3. *Shaker Laboring*

If there exists a faithful means of reproducing Shaker architecture, the key would be in Shaker laboring.<sup>38</sup> The language of labor suffused life among the Shakers. "Laboring" is first what a Believer does in the meeting house, their central place of worship.<sup>39</sup> Laboring is praying, singing, receiving spiritual visions, dancing, and performing other ecstatic worship practices

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<sup>38</sup> According to *Historical Dictionary of the Shakers*, Labor/Laboring: "This term, whatever its grammatical form, denotes specific Shaker actions. To "labor down," for example, is to engage in "peculiar movements" and **exercises**, taught through revelation to Father **Joseph Meacham**, "which he gave to the people (White and Taylor, *Shakerism* 101). Through physical actions such as shaking, whirling, clapping, dancing, and marching, common **Shakers** as well as **elders** seek "spiritual assistance": thus, the "labor," for example, for **gifts** they can share—a new song or a personal improvement, such as acquiring humility..." See also: "Exercise(s)." Duffield, Holley Gene, *Historical Dictionary of the Shakers*, Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements, No.28, (Lanham, Maryland, London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2000), 75-76 (emphasis in original).

<sup>39</sup> The Meetinghouse (as mentioned above discussing the "meeting room") is different from a typical Christian Church in many ways. Most significantly, they are not sacred spaces, a designation which would in turn mark the surrounding structures and fields "profane" in comparison. No such distinction existed in Shaker communities or Shaker theological organization as will be seen shortly below. In fact, it is worth pointing out that the meetinghouse was one of the very few places in which non-Believers were allowed in Shaker Villages along with the gift shop and trustees office. Whereas, dwelling houses were strictly off-limits to all visitors, and even to novice Shakers who had yet to "sign the covenant" pledging their physical, political, social, and spiritual bodies to the community. Meetinghouses are highly nuanced structures in terms of both their internal organization which is closely linked with cultural practices specific to Shakerism, and also the timber structures which undergird and suspend the central open meeting space. Meetinghouses would have been seen as structural marvels if not novelties for their time due to their structural sophistication on what was then the American frontier. See Nicoletta, "The Architecture of Control" and McLendon, "'Leap and Shout, Ye Living Building!'"

relatively well known to the Second Great Awakening of mid-nineteenth century America.<sup>40</sup> All forms of labor beyond the meeting house are meant to invoke and channel this spiritual “laboring”; hence the notion that working is worshipping. An example of such spiritual laboring can be seen in what has been called Shaker “Spirit Manifestations” or “gifts.”<sup>41</sup> These included songs, pantomimes, drawings, moments of rapture, spirit possessions, and dances.<sup>42</sup> The “Whirling Gift” is perhaps the most well-known example, and the cause of the United Society of Believers’ colloquial name (Figure 3.8).<sup>43</sup> During a Shaker service, any Believer might stand as the spirit took them and begin to whirl about; they would continue this physical expression of individual heavenly inspiration, spinning and spinning until falling to the ground, their body exhausted.<sup>44</sup> Of this experience, Arthur E. McLendon writes, “Performing this powerful bond of

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<sup>40</sup> Shaker laboring practices predate, in some cases, their arrival in North America, and thus the first and second Great Awakenings. Nevertheless, the Shakers were far from unique in their fervent worship, as many other unrelated groups show. See Nicoletta, “The Architecture of Control,” 356.

<sup>41</sup> On Shaker “Spirit Manifestation” see Sally M. Promey, “Celestial Visions: Shaker Images and Art Historical Method.” *American Art* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 78–99; *Spiritual Spectacles: Vision and Image in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Shakerism*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

<sup>42</sup> The Shakers assiduously documented many of these manifestations in their journals, day books, and more. Most of these sources remained unavailable to the public until the 1930s when significant amounts of Shaker archival material became accessible for research. Shaker gift drawing in particular suggests exciting potential for future research as no architectural historian has, as of yet, given their depictions of events, buildings, or the village serious consideration. The single notable exception does not address Gift Drawings (always performed by female “instruments” or “prophets”), but a parallel drawing practice he names “Village Views” (which were always produced by male leaders or administrators). See Emlen, *Shaker Village Views: Illustrated Maps and Landscape Drawings by Shaker Artists of the Nineteenth Century* (University Press of New England, 1987).

<sup>43</sup> Before they were the United Society, a name they took once they established their church in North America, Ann Lee and her followers were involved with the Wardleys, a group of Quakers in Manchester England. It seems that the name “Shakers” or “Shaking Quakers” derives from this period due to their practice of ecstatic worship as a variant of Quakerism. See Stein *The Shaker Experience in America*, 3–14.

<sup>44</sup> Along with the Darrow School, one other organization inhabits former Shaker buildings at Mount Lebanon. This religious group of Americans converted to Sufiism and claim to have chosen to live communally in this building because of the resonance they note with Shaker practice. No scholarship has been published to date on this anomaly bringing together diverse religions in a specific work of American architecture. The annual Shaker Seminar met in a previous year at Mount Lebanon, those who attended were able to speak with and hear from representatives from the Sufi community living there. Nicoletta makes passing reference to them as well, (“Structures for Communal Life,” 383). For a provocative comparison on this kind of spirit manifestation see Aihwa

communal identity, the Shakers' dance ritual became a moving crescendo of purifying spiritual encounter that was literally breathtaking."<sup>45</sup>

Surrounded by these vivid eruptions of material inspirations in daily life, the Shaker's believed that the heavenly city was immanent in every common action. Another expression of this; all Shaker villages had both worldly and spiritual names. They lived both, for instance, in the incorporated township of Mount Lebanon, Columbia County, New York, *and* in the spiritual city of Holy Mount, the center of the United Society of Believers' Ministry.<sup>46</sup> The practice of laboring exposed the simultaneity and interpenetration of these two cities, in the same way that spiritual labor is simultaneous with temporal labor. Laboring acted as a threshold exposing an earthly heaven to the initiated, for as long as their breath lasted.

The founder and charismatic pulse of Shakerism, Mother Ann Lee, had many maxims for life; her followers called them testimonies from her communion with the holy spirit. One of the most frequently quoted in architectural discourse comments on the relationship between labor and faith. It reads: "Put your hands to work and your heart to God."<sup>47</sup> A close reading of this maxim helps to further explain the superimposition of temporal and spiritual life among the

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Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987).

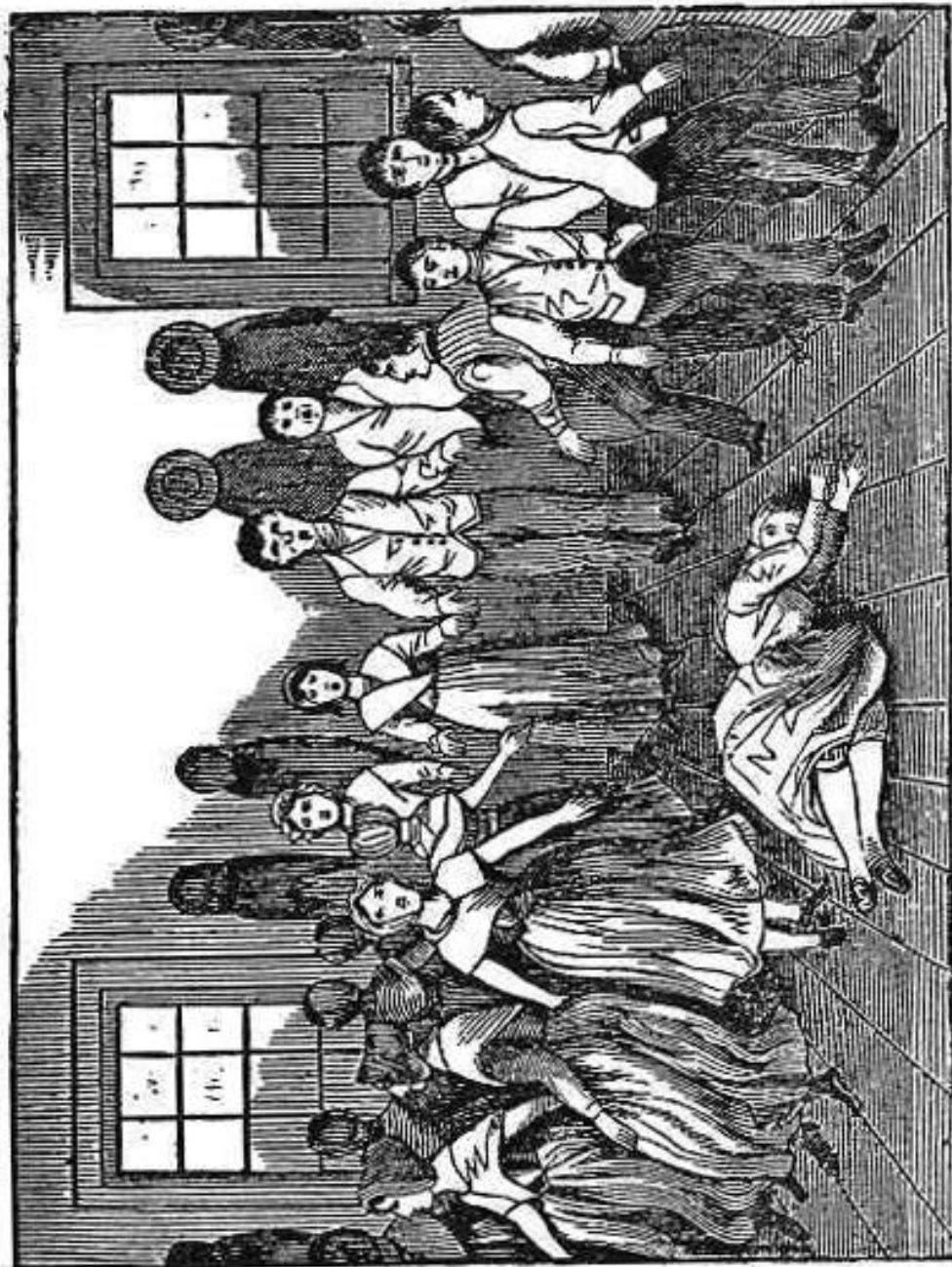
<sup>45</sup> McLendon, "'Leap and Shout, Ye Living Building!'," 67.

<sup>46</sup> Between 1838 and 1854 each Shaker community received a second name for the heavenly city that existed in step with the earthly one, and which was accessible only to Believers. See Hayden, *Seven American Utopias*, 66-68.

<sup>47</sup> United Society of Believers, *Testimonies of the Life, Character, Revelations and Doctrines of Mother Ann Lee, and the Elders with her, Through whom the Word of Eternal Life was opened to this day, of Christ's Second Appearing, Collected from Living Witnesses, in Union with the Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons, and Co., Printers, 1888), pp.29, 36, 207, 208, 210, 246, 261, 262, 271. Ann Lee never wrote her maxims down. If she knew how to write, she would not have compiled them. Such behavior remains consistent with her charismatic persona, and the primacy of obtaining personal connection with God through communal life (one more aporia). It should be noted in passing, that Ann Lee was not a Communist. Full communal living was not introduced into Shakerism until after Mother Ann's death; it was way of life (quickly growing in popularity in England, though little apparent in North America at this moment) that was thought to aid in the aspiration to living a spiritual life free from the fetters and temptations of temporal life. And as such, constituted an early opposition to prevailing political thought in North America.



**Figure 3.8.** “Whirling Gift,” unknown author, engraving, c.1830. (Stein, *The Shaker Experience in America*, figure 15).



The Whirling Gift.

Shakers, and shows that this simultaneity ultimately produces an ethical paradox. Understanding the way in which Mother Ann used this maxim is central to the Shaker *form-of-life* and the things it produced.<sup>48</sup> Speaking to a (presumably) non-Shaker man concerned with the health of his ailing wife after child birth, Mother Ann proselytizes:

If you are faithful to obey the gospel God will bless you and make you prosperous. When you return home, put your hands to work and your heart to God, and keep your family to work, and you will be able to pay your debts, and none of your creditors shall distress you; and instead of applying to physicians, take faith in the power of God, and your woman shall be made whole.

In this response to the husband, Mother Ann suggests he first work hard and pay his debts, and then (avoiding intervention from a medical professional) pray to God for the health of his wife. Is Mother Ann preaching subservience to faith or to economic order? To follow a Believer's interpretation lends very different answers to this question than to follow those of an apostate, much less an atheist.<sup>49</sup> Mother Ann's advice suggests not that devotional and temporal labor have been fused, but that they have been super-imposed on and into one another. This correspondence is akin to that between a work of architecture (like a room) and a radical utopian project; as is so frequently referenced in the etymology of the word "e/utopia," a utopian project is by definition literal, non-existent, and ideal all at once. According to Janet Sarbanes, faith

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<sup>48</sup> Here I have in mind Giorgio Agamben's discussion of the absolute coextensivity "without remainder" of life and rules typified by medieval monasticism broadly writ. See Giorgio Agamben, *The Highest Poverty: Monastic Rules and Form-Of-Life*, 2013).

<sup>49</sup> Numerous apostates have written accounts of Shaker villages, indeed the most substantial account of Shakerism outside of the Shaker's own publications in the early nineteenth century derive mostly from them. See Mary M. Dyer, *The Rise and Progress of the Serpent from the Garden of Eden, to the Present Day: With a Disclosure of Shakerism, Exhibiting a General View of Their Real Character and Conduct--from the First Appearance of Ann Lee. Also, the Life and Sufferings of the Author, Who Was Mary M. Dyer, but Now Is Mary Marshall*. (Concord, N.H.: Printed for the author, 1847). See also Elizabeth A. De Wolfe, *Shaking the Faith: Women, Family, and Mary Marshall Dyer's Anti-Shaker Campaign, 1815-1867* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

served substantial moral, cultural, and economic ends simultaneously, a fact which while confirming Shaker belief in an immanent reality, also seems to confirm the doubts of a sceptic.<sup>50</sup>

This plays out with regard to the aesthetics of Shaker craftsmanship. Every force might evolve a form, but it is faith in God and devotion to your community that matters. If “functionalism” is more than a resulting, un-intentional aesthetic, and exists as a Shaker value, it has to do with economic security and faithful, moral service, rather than a desire for aesthetic expression. Shaker Elder Frederick William Evans of Mount Lebanon’s North Family, commented directly on the Shaker sense of beauty.<sup>51</sup> In his book *The Communistic Society of the United States; From Personal Visit and Observation* published in 1875, Charles Nordhoff recounts numerous conversations with Elder Evans.<sup>52</sup> Perceiving what he understood as the lack of importance of beauty and ornamentation in the Shaker’s buildings “which mostly have the appearance of mere factories or human hives,” Nordhoff asked “whether, if they were to build anew, they would not aim at some architectural effect, some beauty of design.” Aside from Nordhoff’s perception that these “mere factories” were void of “some beauty of design,” and

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<sup>50</sup> Janet Sarbanes, “The Shaker ‘Gift’ Economy: Charisma, Aesthetic Practice and Utopian Communalism.” *Utopian Studies* 20, no. 1 (March 2009): 121–39.

<sup>51</sup> Elder F.W. Evans (1808-1893) was born in England to soldier George Evans and aristocrat Sarah White. Aside from his prolific and significant work articulating the Shaker faith as an elder of the North Family in Mount Lebanon, also of note is his relationship with his somewhat better known brother, George Henry Evans. Both brothers sought radical reform in their respective ways. For a brief history of F.W. Evans see C.E. Robinson, *The Shakers and Their Homes: A Concise History of The United Society of Believers*, facsimile (Canterbury, New Hampshire: Shaker Village, Inc. in collaboration with New Hampshire Publishing Company, [1893] 1976), pp.124-134. For more on G.H. Evans see Jeffrey, J. Pilz, *The Life, Work and Times of George Henry Evans, Newspaperman, Activist and Reformer (1829-1849)*, Studies in American History, Vol.32 (Lewiston; Queenston; Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001).

<sup>52</sup> Charles Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States; From Personal Visit and Observation; Including Detailed Accounts of the Economists, Zoarites, Shakers, The Amana, Oneida, Bethel, Aurora, Icarian, and Other Existing Societies, Their Religious Creeds, Social Practices, Numbers, Industries, and Present Conditions*. (Franklin Square, New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1875). On the Shakers see pp. 115-256; for Nordhoff’s visit to Mount Lebanon and his conversations with Elder Evans see pp.151-179. Also quoted in Hayden, *Seven American Utopias*, 76.

aside from the fact that the twentieth-century account of Shaker aesthetics sees this sparsity specifically *as* the beauty of their design sensibility, Elder Evans (who agreed with neither of these postulations) responds plainly and claims a Shaker stance on the intention to build with beauty. As Nordhoff recounts:

He replied with great positiveness, "No, the beautiful as you call it, is absurd and abnormal. It has no business with us. The divine man has no right to waste money upon what you would call beauty, in his house or his daily life, while there are people living in misery." In building anew, he would take care to have a more equal distribution of heat, and a more general care for protection and comfort, because these things tend to health and long life. But no beauty.<sup>53</sup>

Whatever the sense of beauty, whether Victorian or Modern, Shaker functionalism stood firmly on moral and pragmatic, rather than aesthetic ground.

Dolores Hayden's early scholarship on utopian building practices brings this discussion of morals and aesthetics back to Shaker laboring practices, and demonstrates one way in which the Shaker building process and works of architecture are bound up with Shakerism. In her 1976 book, *Seven American Utopias*, Hayden looks to the Shaker's form of labor practice, to articulate the significance of environmental design for utopian aspirations.<sup>54</sup> Where the Andrewses' book *Religion in Wood* (1982) flattens Shaker laboring into a simple equation (wood working = worship), Hayden's analysis of Shaker design complicated prevailing notions of this well-known Shaker belief by emphasizing a communal design and execution process.<sup>55</sup> To argue for the importance of this practice in the overall aspirations of Shakerism, Hayden employs the Shaker

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<sup>53</sup> Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States*, 164-65.

<sup>54</sup> Dolores Hayden, "The 'Social Architects' and Their Architecture of Social Change," *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 9, no. 2-3 (March 1, 1973): 182-98; also *Seven American Utopias*.

<sup>55</sup> Sally Promey provides a significant critique of Hayden's emphasis on the arrangement and division of space. Her schema, Promey argues, "contrasts ordered (regenerate) earthly space with disordered heavenly space... and therefore fails to capture the complexity of the Shaker spatial system" (237n22). For a more detailed explanation see Promey, *Spiritual Spectacles*.

concept of the “living building.”<sup>56</sup> “Each member,” Hayden explains, was “part of the living building, [and] was engaging in a physical labor fully identified with life’s ultimate purpose, translating visual concepts into physical reality.”<sup>57</sup> As mentioned above the Shakers occupied a landscape that was both temporal and spiritual, and Shaker laboring acted as a doorway from one into the other. Socialist historian Henri Desroche concludes that “the Shakers were seeking transcendence in immanence itself... by creating a world which would no longer be ‘of this world,’ yet nevertheless would be here, now, and real.”<sup>58</sup>

Hayden writes that “the physical process of designing and building new settlements” allowed the members of the community to witness and take account of their own success.<sup>59</sup> The Shakers understood, in other words, how to harness “the power of environmental design as a force for social change... They probed the perceptual questions which link social behavior with environmental design.”<sup>60</sup> If the Shakers were one of many disciplined religious sects, Hayden argues, then it was their use of architecture which allowed them to endure while others faltered and faded into the past. The “design dilemmas” of physical manifestation forced the Shakers to confront “the contradictions inherent in their strategy” of social reorganization. Immediately

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<sup>56</sup> This phrase derives from a Shaker hymn: “Leap and Shout, ye living building / Christ in his glory come / Cast your eyes on Mother’s Children / See what glory fills the room!” Seth Y. Wells, *Millennial Praises* (Hancock, Mass.: Josiah Tallcott Jr., 1813), 158. Quoted in Hayden, *Seven American Utopias*, p.68; McLendon, ““Leap and Shout, Ye Living Building!”,” 76n83.

<sup>57</sup> Hayden, *Seven American Utopias*, 100.

<sup>58</sup> Henri Desroche, *The American Shakers: From Neo-Christianity to Presocialism*, (trans. from French, and ed.) John K. Savacool, (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1971), 87; quoted in Hayden, *Seven American Utopias*, 102n1.

<sup>59</sup> Hayden’s claim can be corroborated perhaps by the many lists of buildings the Shakers both made and circulated amongst the various Shaker communities. Although some of these lists relate directly to temporal concerns (like fire insurance), many others serve no pragmatic purpose. Some accounts of Shaker buildings appeared as drawings which were not only circulated, but were also produced solely for internal, community related purposes and not shown to non-Believers. See Emlen, *Shaker Village Views*.

<sup>60</sup> Hayden, *Seven American Utopias*, 66.

upon gathering to construct their new heavenly community, they had to begin making decisions with regard to paradoxical tensions: “the model community had to be controlled but innovative, collective but voluntary, unique but replicable.”<sup>61</sup>

The Shaker aesthetic so well catalogued today is the product of this effort. Shaker earthly space, to follow Hayden’s argument, was characterized by a social discipline enforced by the “orthogonal” organization of movement, posture, and gestures.<sup>62</sup> The *Millennial Laws* sought to impose a strict system by which everything from the movement of Believers around the village following straight lines (enforced by constructed paths and fences), to the sparse design of furniture and buildings (free from ornamental flourish), and even to the bearing of individuals while at meals and elsewhere. However, while these manifestations of “the Shaker building and process appear to represent pure discipline,” Hayden argues that within “the closed system of Shaker life, every physical design made possible a responsive, opposite spiritual action.” And thus, heavenly space was typified by the release from the dictates of the *Millennial Laws* in the form of ecstatic worship in its many forms. As Hayden succinctly puts it, to understand and “appreciate the straight chairs, one must know the whirling dances.”<sup>63</sup>

Nevertheless, the concept of Shaker immanence and the seductive notion of a “living building” should not obscure the fact that the ethical paradox embedded in Shaker laboring

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<sup>61</sup> Hayden argues, “only if communities *resolved* these contradictions in the process of design and building could they achieve their ideological and architectural goals.” This is perhaps my largest disagreement with Hayden’s account. Where she sees architecture bringing resolution to this dialectical process, I argue that it embeds and retains contradictions while appearing singular and unified. And further, that to see architecture as a resolution rather than a resolution in conflict, obscures dissensus as consensus in favor of an ideological purity that can only be applied after the fact. Hayden, *Seven American Utopias*, 33,39.

<sup>62</sup> “Shaker spatial discipline,” Hayden writes, “was enforced less by surveillance or admonitions [which is the position Nicoletta will later take] than by Shaker design and crafts.” And further, “Social control was thus achieved through careful articulation of personal identity” as exemplified by their literal position in strict spatial distribution and movement patterns. See Hayden, *Seven American Utopias*, 69-71.

<sup>63</sup> Hayden, *Seven American Utopias*, 100.

cannot be *resolved* by belief, but only accepted. The correspondence between the temporal and heavenly worlds in Shakerism maintains an insoluble relationship between a labor practice and its effects. On one side of this stand the sincere ideals of a believer, and on the other the practical effects of their spiritualized labor.<sup>64</sup> In 2015, Shaker Brother Arnold Hadd perfectly captured this tension in an opening presentation to an exhibition of Shaker artefacts at the Farnsworth Art Museum in Rockland, Maine: “the Shakers,” Brother Arnold intones, “were the ultimate capitalist communists... They were very shrewd men who knew how to make money, and they did.”<sup>65</sup> For Brother Arnold, communism and capitalism are not in opposition, but, in fact, mutually constitutive.<sup>66</sup> Though interesting to contemplate in its own right, the relevance of this sentiment here is the extent to which even in 2015 Brother Arnold continues the line of thought inaugurated by Mother Ann: *if* individual craftsmanship and the artistry of workmanship may be emphasized, they also must remain subservient to both faith and economic productivity.

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<sup>64</sup> A paradox all too familiar to contemporary architects and architectural historians accepting far less remuneration for the opportunity to live up to their own ideals. See Peggy Deamer, *The Architect as Worker: Immaterial Labor, the Creative Class, and the Politics of Design*. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015). This paradox has also played out in the architectural theory and history of the 1970s. Manfredo Tafuri’s Marxist critique of Modern architecture, for instance, argues that whatever one’s social aspirations, the mode of production of a work of architecture determines its social effect. Tafuri’s belief would most likely lead him to a harsher analysis of *Hands to work, Heart to God* and Shaker laboring in general, than that Hayden has professed. See Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976). Also Dolores Hayden, “Review of *Review of Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development*, by Manfredo Tafuri and Barbara Luigi la Penta,” *Technology and Culture* 20, no. 1 (1979): 203–4.

<sup>65</sup> Michael K. Komanecky (Chief Curator), “The Shakers: From Mount Lebanon to the World,” Farnsworth Art Museum, Morehouse Wing (June 14, 2014 - March 08, 2015; Extended through March 8 due to popular demand). Brother Arnold quoted in Lance Esplund, “The First American Modernists; for the Shakers, “Beauty Rests in Utility” *Wall Street Journal* (New York, N.Y) 06 Aug 2014. See also “The Shaker Way of Life” (Radio Interview on August 7, 2015), National Public Radio show *On Point*, (guests) Chief Curator Michael K. Komanecky, Brother Arnold from Sabbathday Lake, and Jerry V. Grant, Director of Collection and Research, at the Shaker Museum, Mount Lebanon. <http://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2014/08/07/the-shaker-way-of-life> (Accessed 27 August 2016).

<sup>66</sup> For a discussion of how later Shakers employed Shaker land to offset debt, see Matthew Cooper, “Relations of Modes of Production in Nineteenth Century America: The Shakers and Oneida,” *Ethnology* 26, no. 1 (January 1987): 1-16.

Everyday working life is much different in application than “the whirling gift,” a fact at the very heart of the spiritual challenge to live life amongst angels. The effects are not necessarily as liberating in the temporal conditions of life. Comparing the two as a Non-Believer it is easy to take a cynical stance.<sup>67</sup> For instance, despite their official equality of all sexes, races, and classes, Shaker Sisters (unsurprisingly) were responsible for all domestic services and Shaker Brothers for all agricultural and construction labor.<sup>68</sup> What are we to make of the Shaker laboring practice known as the “sweeping gift”?<sup>69</sup> Like the whirling gift before, the sweeping gift transforms a daily task – in this case cleaning the dwelling house rather than praying – into a celebration that manifests and makes visible (to those who believe) in one’s very musculature the heavenly city here and now.<sup>70</sup> Likewise, though it is well known that the Shakers frequently took in orphans, it is infrequently acknowledged that they were not adopted, but indentured; and that they too labored in the fields by mandate of state and federal law (Figure 3.9).<sup>71</sup> These children

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<sup>67</sup> For an earlier account of this difficult task first published in 1883 see C. E. Robinson’s preface to *The Shakers and Their Homes*. Robinson quotes the then mayor of New Haven: “How far these communistic ideas, which are spread so broadcast, are the outcome of an ardent and honest desire on the part of the individual to benefit the poorer classes of the community, or of a desire to be a promoter in the scheme, and thus reap financial or political benefit as a leader, it is not easy to determine.” And indeed, Shaker history is replete with examples of Shaker Trustees (an appointed position in the Shaker community designating those who dealt with a given Shaker family’s temporal – mostly financial – affairs) absconding with large sums of money, never to be found or prosecuted.

<sup>68</sup> For more on this ambivalence and a consideration of Shaker social structure as a precursor to the Feminist movement in the United States see Marjorie Proctor-Smith, *Women in Shaker Community and Worship: A Feminist Analysis of the Uses of Religious Symbolism*, Studies in Women and Religion, Vol.16, (Lewiston/Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), esp. Part V. “Internal Revival: Mother Anne’s Work.” See also Stein, *The Shaker Experience in America*, 184-199, esp. 196-97. For a psychological analysis of the decision to join Shaker communities see Desroche, *The American Shakers*, esp. Ch.5: “Distinguishing Between the Church & the World; Ascetic Feminism,” 139-184.

<sup>69</sup> See Sprigg, *By Shaker Hands*, 107-114.

<sup>70</sup> For more on the dancing body as spiritual worship in Shakerism and in relation to architecture see McLendon, “‘Leap and Shout, Ye Living Building!’”

<sup>71</sup> Surprisingly, this fact had strong repercussions on federal regulation of interstate contract law in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as Shaker converts tended to move from relatively great distances. The Shakers were adept at convincing working age adults into converting, and if not that, of dedicating their children to the community in order to learn a trade and gain a basic education. More famously, contract disputes over indentured children also contributed to founding divorce law in the United States. See De Wolfe, *Domestic Broils*;



were bound by legal contract to their employer/guardian either by their biological parents or the State of New York so that they might be fed, clothed, and learn a trade, and also so that this Shaker guardian might capitalize on their labor while educating them (Figure 3.10).<sup>72</sup> In yet one more unexpected turn for a community so well known as craftsmen, there are surprisingly few depictions or accounts of Shakers actually working. It is frequently noted how much they work, but what they are working on, how they are working, and the decision-making process for all fabrication is founded on little archival evidence and much speculation.

With this paradox firmly in mind, those confronting Shaker architecture are faced with a difficult question. Do *we* believe that *they* believed this? How does belief affect the indentured, hired, or neighborly laborers as opposed to those adults who chose this form-of-life? But does the potential for a variety of attitudes towards Shakerism in the laboring process affect their collective product? For true Believers, laboring is an act of worshiping, and not a means to an end. As such, any commodities produced were a surplus to be expended in order to facilitate further laboring, and to prepare the earth that much more for the Millennium.

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New Hampshire Shakers eds, *A Remonstrance against the Testimony and Application of Mary Dyer: Requesting Legislative Interference against the United Society Commonly Called Shakers: Together with Some Affidavits and Certificates Showing the Falsity of Her Statements* (Concord [N.H.]: Printed by Isaac Hill, 1818).

<sup>72</sup> Take, for instance, this typical language from pre-made indenture form type-set and printed with blanks to be filled: "Witnesseth, That the said parties have, in conformity to the civil institutions of the said State, agreed and covenanted in the form as follows, viz.: That the said \_\_\_\_\_ aged \_\_\_\_ years on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_ by and with the consent of \_\_\_\_\_, hat of \_\_\_\_ own free will, placed and bound \_\_\_\_\_ unto the said \_\_\_\_\_ a member of the United Society (called Shakers) of said \_\_\_\_\_ to be under the care and in the employment of the said \_\_\_\_\_, as such member, in whatever may be for the present good, or to the future benefit and welfare of the said \_\_\_\_\_ according to the customs, principles and practice, as far as may be lawful, of the aforesaid Society, until \_\_\_\_ the said \_\_\_\_\_ shall have arrived at the full age of eighteen years..." Text extracted from one such completed form, see Indenture, August 1, 1838 of Cornelia Douglas to Jonathan Wood (New Lebanon), ~15"x12.5", Call # 4295, HSVA.

**Figure 3.9.** Indentured Child Laborers, unknown photographer, black and white photograph, c.1880, The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, The Edward Deming Andrews Memorial Shaker Collection, SA166.



Figure 3.10. Indenture Form, Mount Lebanon, NY, 1840. Call # 9787, yellow dot, HSVA.

9787  
714

## This Indenture,

made the *twentieth*  
day of *April*, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and *forty*  
BETWEEN *Jonathan Wood* of the town of *New Lebanon* in the County of  
*Columbia* and State of New-York, of the first part; and *John Anderson*, late  
of the Town of *New Baltimore*, in the County of *Green* and state of  
*New York*, of the second part:

Witnesseth: That the said *John Anderson*, aged *nine* years,  
on the *twenty sixth* day of *June* last past, by and with the consent of his  
Mother *Clarissa Anderson* hath placed and bound himself apprentice to *Jonathan  
Wood* aforesaid.—And with the said *Jonathan Wood* to dwell, reside, and  
serve, from the day of the date hereof, until the said *John Anderson* shall have attained  
the age of *twenty one* years; which will be on the *twenty sixth* day of *June*  
in the year one thousand eight hundred and *fifty one*; During all which time, the said apprentice  
shall well and faithfully serve his said Master, and obey all his lawful commands; and shall in  
all respects conduct himself in a faithful, honest and moral manner, and as a good and faithful apprentice.

And the said *Jonathan Wood* covenants with the said *John Anderson*  
that he will teach and instruct the said *John* or cause him to be taught or instructed,  
after the best way and manner he can, in the mystery and occupation of a *farmer*; or  
such other manual occupation or branch of business as shall be found best adapted to his genius and capacity:  
That he will furnish and provide said apprentice with meat, drink, washing, lodging, and suitable apparel, and  
other things necessary for said apprentice, during the term aforesaid and the continuance of this indenture. That  
he will cause said apprentice, during said term, to be instructed to read and write, and also the common and  
general rules of arithmetic; and at the expiration of his service, will give said apprentice a new Bible.

In witness whereof, the parties aforesaid have hereto respectively set their hands and seals, the  
day and year first above written.

Sealed and delivered  
in presence of  
*Seth V. Mills*  
*Soll Deen*

*John Anderson*  
mark  
*Jonathan Wood*

I, *Clarissa Anderson*, Wife of the Town of *Stockbridge* in the County of  
*Berkshire*, and state of *Massachusetts* the Mother of *John  
Anderson* named in the above indenture; having consented that he should bind himself  
as therein stated, DO hereby signify my consent thereto, according to such case made and provided.

Dated the *twentieth* day of *April* in the year *1840*.

*Clarissa Anderson*  
mark

*John Anderson of New Baltimore*  
1274

### 3.4. (Un)Faithful Documentation

In the context of this thesis, to doubt the sincerity of Shaker practices, or to criticize the American Wing's employment of a particular Shaker historiography in order to forward their own agenda amounts to the same thing. Any interpretation of the "Shaker Retiring Room" solely considering the complex ideological framing of a single group of authors (much less a single author) necessarily avoids addressing the putative transparency of period room technology and the labor implicated in its construction: to accept either as *avoidable*, in other words, is to obscure one while valorizing the other. As a work of architecture, the Shaker period room is the product of a *plural authorship*. The challenge is to interpret this work without attributing authorship as if the room were singular, transparent, or the result of a consensus.

Where the Shakers adamantly opposed ascribing authorship to any individual craftsmen, however, the Met publicly acknowledges the work that went into their many period rooms. In 1996, then director of the MMA, Philippe de Montebello, summarized and responded to the debate surrounding the place of period rooms and their fluid relation to historical truth. Montebello discussed the "collaborative effort" necessary to produce a period room. Writing that each installation required "the talent and hard work of those whose names we will never read."<sup>73</sup> It was a bluntly accurate statement. Montebello offered little further elaboration on these necessary collaborators.

Thus acknowledged but uncredited, these still unnamed laborers varied widely. Even with an incomplete list, the number of workers involved in the production of *just* the Shaker room proliferates unexpectedly (Appendix B). The American Wing employed a surprising

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<sup>73</sup> De Montebello, Philippe, "Introduction," *Period Rooms in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, (ed.) Amelia Peck (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art & H.N. Abrams, 1996), pp.9-13.

number of individuals and organizations in the production of the “Shaker Retiring Room.” Even a provisional list proliferates unexpectedly. Each worked with various forms of documents, each engaged through the interests of their respective profession, and all arrived with idiosyncratic beliefs and prior knowledge of the Shakers. Their labor remains manifest in both the Shaker room itself, and the documents they produced during the course of their work. These often banal documents offer unique insight into the overlooked and under-acknowledged beliefs leading directly to the manifestation of the Shaker period room. This list of laborers is not comprehensive – I continue to find more names to add, more authors to acknowledge. Indeed, the difficulty is not finding those who contributed something, but instead, in attempting to evaluate whose work belongs on the list of those responsible for the making of this work of architecture.<sup>74</sup>

For example, there were at least three architecture firms involved in its orchestration: Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates out of Connecticut developed the MMA’s masterplan, D.M.C. Hopping in New York City specialized in historic restoration and period room installation, and George Sexton and Associates in Washington D.C. contributed framing plans for use by Master-Carpenter Ezra Mills.<sup>75</sup> D.M.C. Hopping not only supervised the installation of over fourteen period rooms at the MMA, he also published an article in *Antiques*

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<sup>74</sup> In contradistinction to Cheek’s photograph (Figure 2.1), this list of laborers remains self-consciously incomplete.

<sup>75</sup> For an official account of the KRJDA masterplan for the “new” MMA, see Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.), Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo and Associates, and Coffey and Levine (Firm), eds. *The Second Century: The Comprehensive Architectural Plan for the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1971). Includes statements from the architecture firm, diagrams and renderings, and inserts the new plan in the history of the MMA’s architectural development. On this history also see Morrison H. Heckscher, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art: An Architectural History*. (New York, N.Y.: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995).



on Shaker architecture over two decades before his work on the “Shaker Retiring Room.”<sup>76</sup>

Hopping and his coauthor Watland were active in the Society of Architectural Historians. “The key to the architecture of the shakers,” they begin their article, “lies in their creed.” As with so many others, Hopping and Watland pay tribute to Shaker beliefs before giving a detailed explanation of their material products. The two are tied together: “Simplicity, honesty, lack of ornamentation are as much characteristics of their buildings as of the Believers themselves.”

Other examples could include the little acknowledged object conservation department at the museum. The identification of wood samples by Mr. R.C. Koeppen of the Center for Wood Anatomy Research, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Madison, Wisconsin. Or, the “ARCHITECTURAL FINISHES EXAMINATION REPORT / CONSERVATION PROPOSAL” prepared by Frank G. Matero of Micro Delta Ltd. on East 42<sup>nd</sup> street in Manhattan.<sup>77</sup> Interestingly, Matero’s report whose objective was “to identify... and to prepare recommendations for cleaning, conservation, and reproduction” stresses the social history of Shakerism finding it necessary to relate the importance of their gathering into “Gospel Order” when proposing how to clean, conserve, and reproduce Shaker woodwork for the period room.

In light of the paradox between labor and belief discussed before, an account of the North Family Joiners can provide a suggestive example to reconsider the production of the Shaker room. Following the two founders of this company, Charles Caffall and Peter Markett, provides a new reading of Heckscher’s document, and perhaps offers this list-form of architectural

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<sup>76</sup> D.M.C. Hopping (1905 - Dec 26, 1990) and Gerald Watland, “The Architecture of the Shakers,” *Antiques* (October 1957), pp.335-39. See also “Obituaries: Daniel M.C. Hopping.” *New York Times*, January 4, 1991, <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/01/04/obituaries/daniel-mc-hopping.html> (Accessed 27 August 2016).

<sup>77</sup> Title fully capitalized in original. Frank G. Matero now works in The School of Design at University of Pennsylvania teaching courses in historic preservation. Accessed 27 August 2016. <https://www.design.upenn.edu/historic-preservation/people/frank-g-matero>.

representation as the Shaker room's corollary to Wright's drawings of the Little house. My earlier reading of the list asks how reliable documents of Lot "B2" are for the production of the "Shaker Retiring Room"; it also considers this particular document as a guarantor of provenance, an item that engenders authority through its archiving. Once we pay more attention to Shaker laboring, Heckscher's list appears as faithful a representation of Lot "B2" as the documentation of the Francis W. Little room is accurate. In other words, if our metric for accuracy of depiction is *not* the arrangement or look of the room, but instead the application of the Shaker's own mode of practice – their architectural process more so than their architectural product – then this list potentially provokes a different and more reliable kind of accuracy. Some of the North Family Joiner's views of the Shakers succumbs to the prevailing Shaker narrative. For instance, treating their tools and methods as parts or aspects of an American arts and crafts nostalgia fails to acknowledge their love of technology.<sup>78</sup> However, when read optimistically Caffall's and Markett's dedication to work with hand tools and Shaker methods demonstrates a significant focus on practice at least as much as product.

The North Family Joiners marketed themselves as part of the back-to-our-roots mentality growing more and more powerful in the years leading up to the bicentennial of both the United States of America and the Shakers. In this historical fervor, the Shakers perhaps appeared to the American Wing as something of a bridge between the counter-cultural interest in communitarian utopias and do-it-yourself governance of the 1960s on the one hand, and the valorization of a

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<sup>78</sup> The Shakers purchased a Model-T when it first became available; a Shaker Sister is credited by some as inventing the rotary saw blade via the adaptation of a spinning wheel for use in domestic textile production; and, the Shakers held numerous patents. One could suggest that if they were at full force today it would not be out of place to see them writing computer code to 3D print new tools or manufacture marketable products or communal necessities. A fact which perhaps suggests a more optimistic reading of other work as well. On digital fabrication premised on the analysis of Shaker artefacts, for instance, see Andrew Saunders, "Material Manifestations," *Journal of Architectural Education* 67, no. 1 (March 7, 2013): 86–95.

purified American past in the form of high-quality antiques, on the other. Both came together in the sociopolitical context of the 1970s.<sup>79</sup> The name North Family Joiners refers to a particular Shaker naming convention.<sup>80</sup> The Shakers named their respective families within the village based on both their relative position to the center of town as designated by the meeting house, and more significantly, on that family's relative proximity to Shaker purity. The Center (sometimes called the Church) family gathered together the most devout, whereas the North Family typically housed what was called the Novitiate order. These were the recently converted who had yet to "sign the covenant" and be given a place in one of the other families. The entry sequence to Shakerism was a long process that required passing through numerous legal, social, and spatial thresholds over many years. As the place of newcomers, the North Family was the first point of contact between worldly perceptions and Shaker beliefs, and as such, they also tended to devote the most energy to communicating those beliefs (hence the prolific publications of a North Family Elder like Evans). Thus, in naming their company the North Family Joiners, Caffall and Markett have situated themselves as gatekeepers. "There were three major Shaker communities in the Berkshires over 100 years ago," they tell us, "and now the North Family Joiners are at work here building furniture in the same style and with the same care and craftsmanship."<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> For the state of architectural discourse at the moment when these crossing paths culminated with the Shaker room in 1981, see Mary McLeod, "Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism," *Assemblage*, no. 8 (1989): 23–59.

<sup>80</sup> A convention of which Caffall and Markett were well aware. See (AP), "Craftsman is pumping gas to pay mortgage," *Daily News*, Bowling Green, Kentucky, (Wednesday, May 30, 1979), p.3C.

<sup>81</sup> Caffall and Markett state in their 1972 catalog (perhaps as a means to lend themselves authority, as well as to indicate where an interested shopper might look to purchase their work for their homes) that some of their reproductions are for sale in the gift shop at the Metropolitan in New York City, and also at the Shaker Museums in Hancock, MA and Chatham, NY. See Caffall and Markett, "North Family Joiners: 1972 Catalog." Description of Shakers on interior flap. AWSF.



The business plan of the North Family Joiners, to put this all more blandly, was viable because it combined counter-cultural cachet with the Berkshire's antiquing culture. Though I cannot necessarily prove this postulation historically, it appears graphically in their promotional pamphlet itemizing the Shaker furniture they can make for you at a reasonable price (Figure 3.11). Caffall and Markett masterfully stage themselves between cultural poles in a photography studio – from their stoic expressions, the detailing on Markett's shirt and pant cuff, to the white backdrop and carefully strewn tools-of-the-reproduction-craftsman-trade, all of this is then given to us in sepia tone oval frame as a public "NOTICE". As has been seen, even a purely cynical reading of their commodification of Shaker artefacts is not, strictly speaking, antithetical with the *hands to work, heart to God* adage.<sup>82</sup>

Nevertheless, their interest in the Shakers extended beyond the simply entrepreneurial. If one looks closely at Caffall's shirt, the embroidery (also their company logo) imitates a Shaker spiritual signature in the form of a hovering-dove (Figure 3.12-13). This presents a poignant example of their awareness of Shakerism, and it is also a reassertion of the paradox discussed earlier between the interpretations of Believers and Non-Believers. There were several versions of this hovering-dove in Shaker culture during what Stein has called the "Era of Manifestations."<sup>83</sup> This period of Shaker history marked the high-point of the Shaker's population; it also witnessed a crisis of political authority within the Shaker's socio-political structure.<sup>84</sup> In part this arose due to the fact that Shakerism carries an implicit tension between

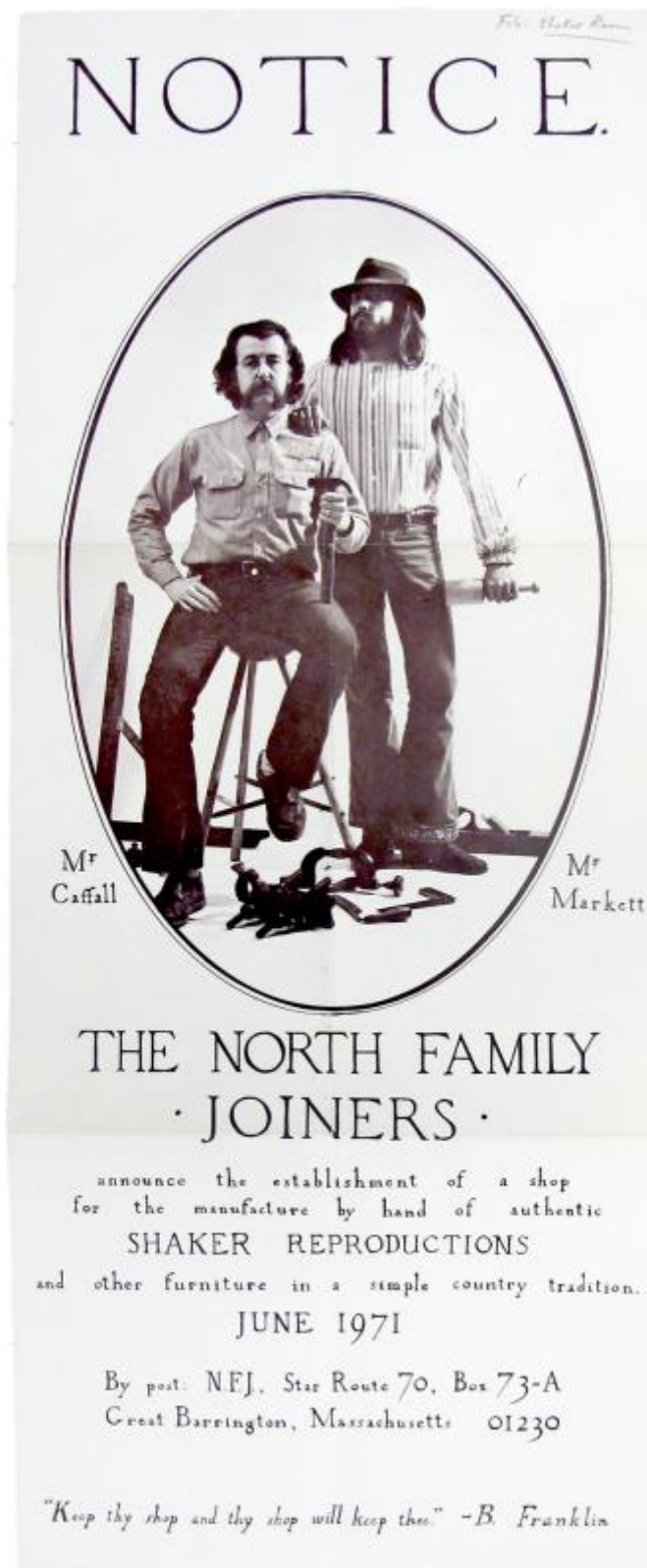
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<sup>82</sup> A point brought even more firmly into view by their quotation of Benjamin Franklin at the bottom of the cover of the Notice: "Keep thy shop and thy shop will keep thee."

<sup>83</sup> From 1827 to 1875. According to Stein: "In the midst of these fifty years, an upheaval of unprecedented proportions, an outburst of spiritualistic manifestations, shook the society to its foundations. From this religious commotion, known among the Believers as Mother Ann's Work and the Era of Manifestations, Shakerism never fully recovered." Stein, *The Shaker Experience in America*, 121, 235.

<sup>84</sup> Sarbanes, "The Shaker 'Gift' Economy."

**Figure 3.11.** "Notice: The North Family Joiners," pamphlet, Barrington, MA, June 1971, AWSF. (Appendix B: Folder D:12)

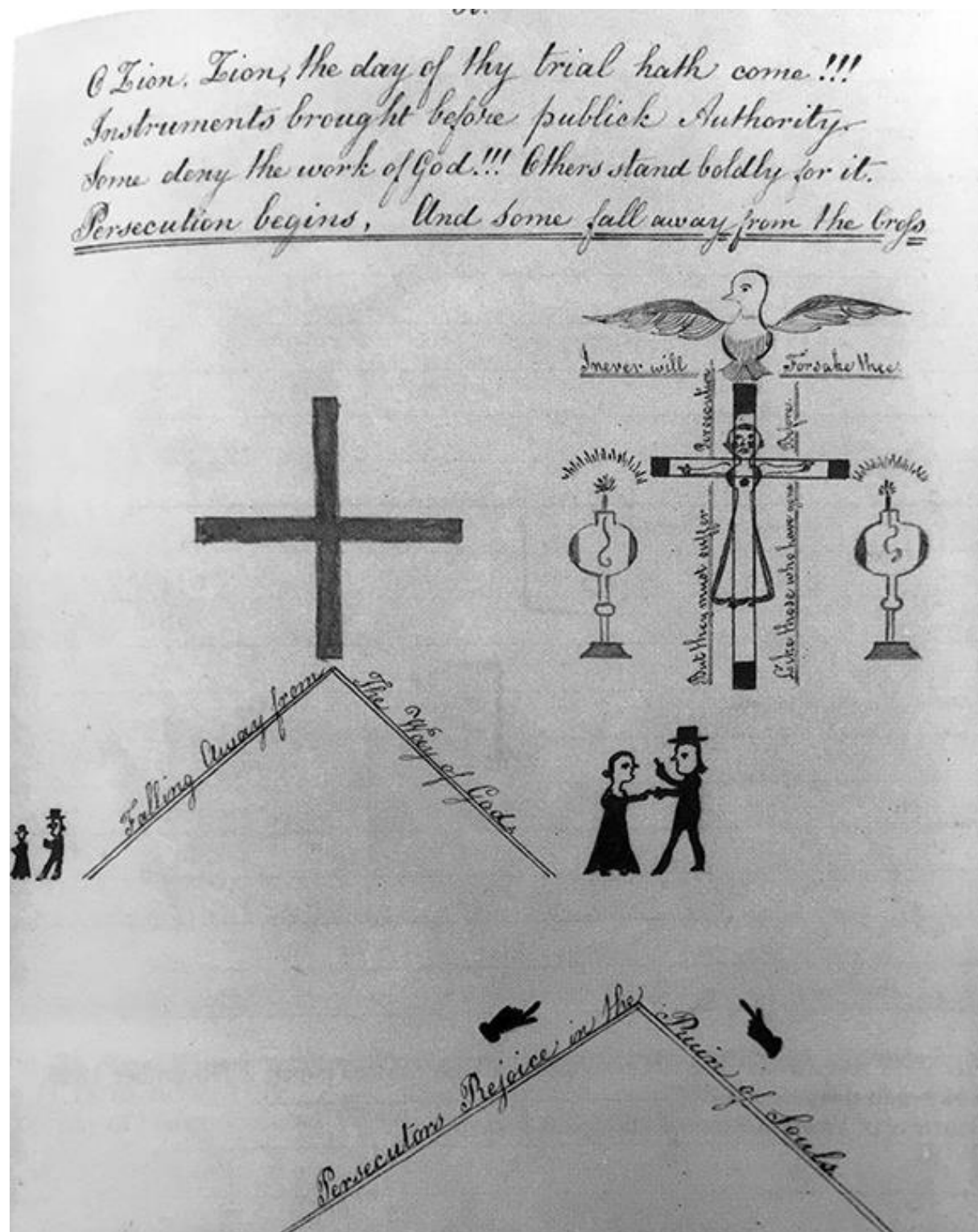


**Figure 3.12.** Detail: “Notice: The North Family Joiners,” pamphlet, Barrington, MA, June 1971, AWSF. (Appendix B: Folder D:12)

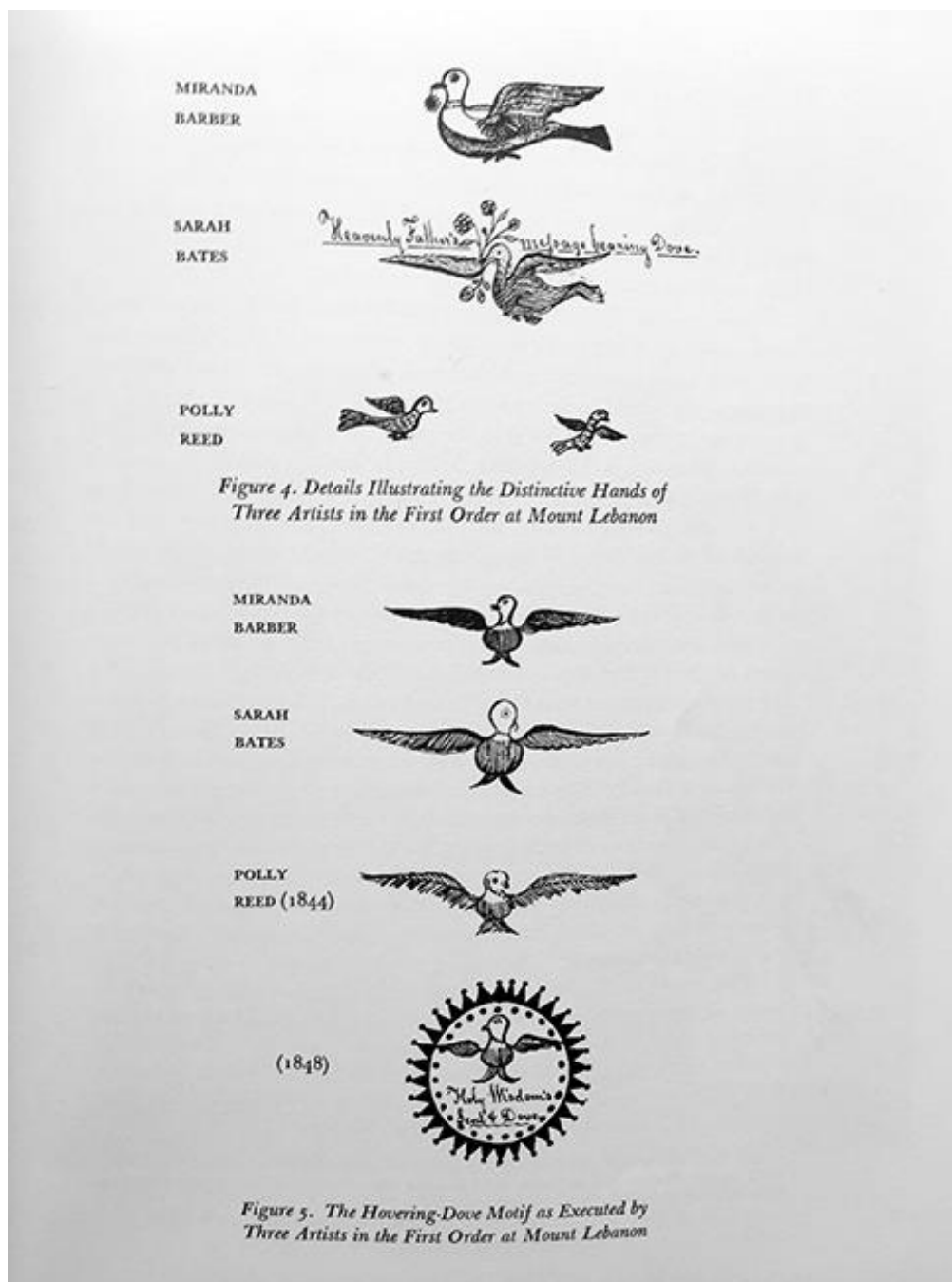




**Figure 3.13.** "Mother Ann's Cross," *Book of Inspired Visions and Messages*, watercolor and ink on paper, June 1843, 8 1/8 inches by 6 1/2 inches, Western Reserve Historical Society. (Promey, *Spiritual Spectacles*, figure 20). Attributed possibly to Miranda Barber and Polly Reed by Sally Promey.



**Figure 3.14.** Hovering-Dove Diagram [“Details Illustrating the Distinctive Hands of Three Artists in the First Order at Mount Lebanon” and “The Hovering-Dove Motif as Executed by Three Artists in the First Order at Mount Lebanon”]. (Figures 4 and 5 from Daniel Patterson, *Gift Drawing and Gift Song*, p.17.)



the necessities of a centralized administration (they seek to grow their community as large as possible), and the belief in one's personal and unmediated relationship with God (a precept central to Protestantism). This dilemma between centralized authority and religious "enthusiasm" laid the groundwork for the appearance of gift drawings – communions with spiritual visitors that took the form of first-hand spiritual experiences, possessions, songs, pantomimes, speaking in tongues, as well as, in some cases, drawings.<sup>85</sup> Each spiritual "instrument" or medium, as these inspired prophets were called, was a woman and counter-acted the formalization of authority at the Shaker ministry in Mount Lebanon. They did this by presenting these spiritual encounters and delivering the sometimes controversial and even subversive messages they contained about the essence of Shakerism. The hovering-dove acted as signatures, and each one designated a specific Shaker Sister. Daniel Patterson has explained this aspect of Shaker culture in his 1983 book *Gift Drawing and Gift Song*.<sup>86</sup> There he includes a diagram of this "hovering-dove motif" correlated with their respective authors (Figure 3.14). The appropriation of this symbol by the North Family Joiners on both their shirts and company logo belies a surprising depth of knowledge regarding the Shakers. These doves may be important to Shaker culture, but they are certainly too fine-grained a detail for a quick look through a book, or pass through a museum exhibition. How conscious was their use of a female Shaker prophet's spiritual signature to symbolize their imitation of Shaker laboring? How collaborative was it? Does the

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<sup>85</sup> The adjective *enthusiastic* is "a designation used pejoratively on both sides of the Atlantic to condemn radical dissenters [i.e.: Protestants] for heterodox beliefs and excessive emotionalism," according to Stein. *The Shaker Experience in America*, 3. To be enthusiastic is to be inspired by the holy spirit, to speak to God directly, to literally be possessed by a spirit (en + theos).

<sup>86</sup> Patterson, Daniel, *Gift Drawing and Gift Song: A Study of Two Forms of Shaker Inspiration*, (Sabbathday Lake, Maine: The United Society of Shakers, 1983). See also Edward Deming Andrews and Faith Andrews, *Visions of the Heavenly Sphere: A Study in Shaker Religious Art* (Charlottesville, VA: Published for The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum by The University Press of Virginia, 1969); Promey, *Spiritual Spectacles*.

labor practice of the North Family Joiners contain a measure of religious devotion, or ecstatic worship?

As this brief look at the North Family Joiner's demonstrates, Morrison Heckscher's list is not a limitation or a less-complete form of documentation. Instead, this list offers an alternative set of constraints and possibilities. Confronted with the remains of a Shaker dwelling house, Caffall and Markett employed their craftsmen skill to produce a collection of objects solely documented on a hand written list now held in the American Wing's files. The Joiner's work dissolved an interior room into a series of self-contained items; the possibility of a future form immanent in a collection of disarticulated pieces. Perhaps the most important observation to note in order to conclude this chapter is that the absence of a detailed deconstruction record is *felt* as an absence. By whom though? The North Family Joiners? The intern? Who would need to feel this absence for that judgement to merit concern from an architectural historian? With only a collection of things, curatorial memories, and historical documents to work from, the development of the Shaker room involved as much creative labor as it did historic reconstruction.<sup>87</sup> With the desired disassembly and construction process turned on its head, this requirement for significant research after the fact, as well as for collaborative, communal labor

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<sup>87</sup> While working on this project I came across Amanda R. Lawrence's recent essay which sought to reconsider the relationship between the architect and the period room. I agree with Lawrence that the architect's role in the preservation and historic representation of works of architecture for museums like the Barnes Foundation (for Lawrence) and the MMA (here) deserves more focused analysis. However, I disagree that this analysis ought to (in effect) colonize new territory for the architect's creativity. In sharp opposition, I have argued that the plurality of authorship in such museum work, and in particular with the case of the period room, overcomes the emphasis on any singular author, capacity, or intention. See Amanda Reeser Lawrence, "Preservation through Replication: The Barnes Foundation," *Future Anterior* 12, no. 1 (2015): 1+.

from Shaker-inspired craftsmen appears here as a benefit or even a goal for the faithful reproduction of a Shaker building.<sup>88</sup>

Whether or not this is the case, however, Heckscher's list creates a very different "Shaker Retiring Room" than Cheek's or Willis's photographs before. Although it might make sense that the curators would turn to the vetted accounts of Shaker historians prior to the narratives developing during the re-emergence of popular interest in the Shaker's communal experiment, I am curious if the American Wing would have needed to rely so heavily on those historical accounts had it not been for the circumstances of their acquisition in Mount Lebanon? Without photographic or drawn documentation of Lot "B2" before it was demolished from which to produce the "Shaker Retiring Room," the curators required established historical accounts in order to legitimate their room's development. What, ultimately, does looking to product over process, at photographs and survey drawings over social, political, and religious beliefs provide for a museum institution? What actions or positions or beliefs does that choice justify? What might looking elsewhere for inspiration and direction instigate?

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<sup>88</sup> Although this does not respond to the concern for what the room will look like; that is, however the North Family Joiners labored, as it has been optimistically suggested above (or otherwise), the end product still allows for Cheek's photograph (Fig.2.1).



#### 4. CONCLUSION: UNFAITHFUL ARCHITECTURE

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Standing back from the period room numerous authors come into view: Believers, curators, historians, contractors, material scientists, and many others (Appendix A). Are we to believe all of their intentions, all of their laborious actions, all of their individual and collective beliefs and complex ideological frameworks cohere into some sort of singular unity, a consensus which is then invested into the material of this room to be expressed like a Shaker spirit manifestation? Are we to believe that these numerous factors exist incoherently, but that they function through the aesthetic experience of each visitor witnessing the arrangement of pieces of furniture within a Shaker room? Too many would have us believe, as the most prolific historians of the Shakers suggested, that here we are looking at *Religion in Wood* – and it is their belief and not our (unfaithful) actions that makes all the difference. From this investigation of some of these laborers, it should be clear at the very least that the “Shaker Retiring Room” of Richard Cheek’s photograph (chapter 2) including the many kinds of labor, ideas, and documents that participated in that narrative, has very little to do with the “Shaker Retiring Room” of Morrison Heckscher’s list (chapter 3). Equally clear, I hope, is the understanding that the differences between these two documents and their distinct objects derive not from interpretation, that is, not from the *Reader*; but from both the work invested and the parameters of the documents consulted in the production of these narratives.

I began to look at the Shakers with an interest in investigating the contemporary anxiety in architectural discourse surrounding “distributed authorship,” and the challenge it poses to the ideal of the individual-architect-craftsman. Simply put, authorship in an age where software facilitates the aggregation of information, authors, and expertise in real time is an ideal that distributes power differently in the design and construction process of building buildings today.

Such capabilities also strain the institutional structures that evaluate the progress of an architectural project via benchmarks, thresholds, or stages of completion; drawing-sets (within the ideal of this new method) no longer change hands upon the completion of a task, but rather, all decisions are brought to seeming coherence collectively in virtual models. The primacy of the drawing has been outpaced. At least, in many places beyond the archive for the time being. Distributed authorship has thus re-emerged in contemporary discourse as a significant challenge to the waning hold (or so many would like us to believe) of the singular genius, pulling all the strings and taking all the credit for the design intent behind any work of architecture – or, as Lev Manovich has reframed Sigfried Giedion, today *Software Takes Command* (2013).

However, what I came to find in the analysis of the many laborers involved in the production of the Shaker room from start to finish was *not* emblematic of this “distributed” ideal. Rather, the challenge that has been posed by so-called “distributed authorship” is not a matter of expanding our notion of the architect to include multiple figures, or of revising our notion of responsibility and oversight with novel theoretical or organizational solutions ready to contend with the new realities of practice – though both are necessary and important. In recognizing the plurality of authors involved in any work of architecture, we are also forced to acknowledge and contend with our still frequently unquestioned insistence that there is a connection between things and *singular* beliefs or belief systems. On the contrary, a work of architecture is not a mirror reflecting *an* author, *a* mode of production, or *a* socio-political system. As much is clear in the case of the Shaker period room.

*Unfaithful architecture* poses a challenging theoretical question for a critical history of architecture. What if architecture were unfaithful to its origins? What is an architecture that does not reflect, but transgresses the people or processes that produced it; an architecture that acts of

its own accord? Unfaithful architecture is not “authored” even when it is produced. As such, it raises a further moral question: how can there be responsibility and accountability free of the concept of the author? This problematic emerged here with regards to the complex and plural authorship of the period room and the impact that had on an ideological critique of the American Wing’s deployment of history. To recall Atterbury’s opening words, if the architecture of the American Wing’s period rooms is indeed unfaithful, then how can we hold the American Wing curators responsible for this “abomination in the sight of the lord”? How do we determine responsibility with this kind of architecture?<sup>1</sup>

To summarize, I want to bring this introduction to a close by recalling a well-worn thought experiment as a means of re-stating my central question and thesis. In 1982 Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels published their controversial polemical essay “Against Theory.”<sup>2</sup> In this essay addressing the role of an author in the interpretation of a text, they discuss the possibility of meaning beyond what the author’s intends. In their thought experiment a man happens upon “a curious sequence of squiggles in the sand” that spell out the words of a poem. Knapp and Michaels question whether or not these inscriptions on the beach can have

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<sup>1</sup> Though it must be saved for another day, Donna Haraway’s discussion of responsibility (“response-ability”) has much to offer the relationship between author and product when thinking with architecture. See Donna J. Haraway, *When Species Meet*, Posthumanities, Volume 3 (Minneapolis, MN & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Originally published in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol.8, No.4 (Summer 1982): 723-42, “Against Theory” spawned numerous strongly worded critiques published in subsequent issues of the journal; the legacy of which has rendered Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels the perennial “bad guys” in literary criticism conversations. Sometimes referred to as the “Against Theory Debates,” W.J.T. Mitchell eventually edited a volume titled *Against Theory: Literary Studies and the New Pragmatism* bringing together the original essay, numerous critiques, as well as a response from Knapp and Michaels to their critics. See Knapp, Steven, and Michaels, Walter Benn, *Against Theory: Literary Studies and the New Pragmatism*. (ed.) W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). Also, for a contrary position on the relative importance and regulatory role of “meaningless” squiggles, see Vismann, *Files*. In particular return to opening chapter “Law’s Writing Lesson” in which she critiques Derrida’s grammatological analysis of Levi-Strauss’s “Writing Lesson,” and a chieftain’s use of meaningless squiggly lines to exert economic and political power over numerous tribes.

meaning for this interpreter if they were not the product of an author's intention. Ultimately, Knapp and Michaels refuse the squiggles any meaning without what Marx calls "purposeful will" – that single trait that separates humans from everything else.<sup>3</sup> But what if those lines in the sand, through whatever unknown process, appeared as a building instead of as a poem. What if, the wave that "wrote" the poem which has no meaning, also "built" a structure in which a person might take refuge? More to the point, what if the "wave" in our story is replaced by a thousand hands, each of which raised one stone and with a unique intention placed it on a pile, and *that* process miraculously built a home?

Walter Benn Michaels explicitly excludes architecture from his and Knapp's analysis of authorial intention. This exclusion centers on the simple fact that "Because the building can't ignore the subject, it can't acknowledge the subject either." He continues, "There is thus no problem about the ontology of buildings, and modernism and postmodernism in architecture are essentially questions of style."<sup>4</sup> The resonances between Michaels's position on the relationship between architecture and style and those espoused by various actors in the American Wing raise questions for another time, but hopefully this story about the plural workings of the Shaker room demonstrate that the ontology of buildings (as opposed to poems), is never merely ontological.<sup>5</sup> Given that this period room is not simply Shaker or American Wing architecture, and that to

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<sup>3</sup> Karl Marx writes: "But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is that the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax. At the end of every labour process, a result emerges which had already been conceived by the worker at the beginning, hence already existed ideally. Man not only effects a change of form in the materials of nature; he also realizes [*verwirklicht*] his own purpose in those materials. ... Apart from the exertion of the working organs, a *purposeful will* is required for the entire duration of the work." Marx, Karl, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, (trans) Ben Fowkes (Penguin Books, in association with New Left Review, 1990), p.284 (emphasis added).

<sup>4</sup> Walter Benn Michaels, *The Shape of the Signifier: 1967 to the End of History* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 158n13.

<sup>5</sup> Refer to the Preface above for my position on the responsible connection between architect and architecture.

name it such and attribute authorship must actively obscure the many kinds of labor and beliefs that went into it, how does an un-attributed architecture authored by a complex and perhaps contradictory aggregate affect our conceptualizations of the architect? In other words, what is the architect within a system of immanent rather than attributed authorship? In the laboring practice of the Shakers or the multivalent work of museum laborers, the intent of each involved never adds up to the effective meaning of the “Shaker Retiring Room.”

## APPENDIX A: List of Laborers

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### Description:

The following is a list of the authors whose work contributed directly to the reproduction of the Shaker room. It appears in no particular order and is not comprehensive, but itemizes the laborers I have come across as of October 2016. The list includes curators and historians, contractors and carpenters, as well as influential books, documents, and others.

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1. Mr. Rosenblatt (?)
2. Berry B. Tracy (Curator, American Domestic Arts, MMA)
3. John K. Howat (Curator, American Paintings and Sculpture, MMA)
4. Morrison H. Heckscher (Assistant Curator, American Domestic Arts, MMA)
5. Craig E. Miller (Assistant Curator, [American Domestic Arts, MMA])
6. Lewis Sharp (?)
7. Amelia Peck (Curatorial Assistant, American Domestic Arts)
8. Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen (Assistant Curator, American Domestic Arts)
9. Jock Howat (worked w/ Morrison H. Heckscher)
10. Nancy E. Richards (Curator, Winterthur Museum)
11. Robert F.W. Meader (Director of the Shaker Museum Foundation in Old Chatham, New York)
12. Tom Robinson (Curator, Philadelphia Museum of Art)
13. Lewis Sharp (Curator and Administrator at MMA, Director of Denver Art Museum since 1989)
14. A.D. Emerich (Shaker Expert in Albany, NY)
15. "Don" (referred to in AWSF as person with whom to review the installation)
16. Ezra Mills (Master Carpenter at MMA, builds period room)
17. United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, called Shakers
18. Charles Caffall, North Family Joiners (deconstruct shaker room on site, reproduction furniture maker)
19. Peter Markett, North Family Joiners (deconstruct shaker room on site, reproduction furniture maker) (sometimes spelled Murkett)
20. Paul Chaitin (floor leveled with concrete skim coat, hired by MHH)
21. Tom Robinson (worked with NFJ for PMA in documentation and deconstruction of NFD rooms)
22. Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo & Associates (Architecture firm in New Haven, CN)
23. D.M.C. Hopping (Architecture firm in NYC)
24. George Sexton Associates (Architecture firm in Washington, D.C.)
25. Alejandra Smith (Staff at George Sexton Associates, Washington, D.C.)
26. Garvan ("R") (Surveyor working for Philadelphia Museum of Art)
27. Unknown Draftsman 1 (hand identified, but name unknown)
28. Unknown Draftsman 2 (hand identified, but name unknown)
29. Ann Winston (American Wing Exhibition Designer)
30. "a New Hampshire Woman" (referenced as maker of window shades, never named)

31. N.E. Baldwin (Historic American Buildings Survey photographer)
32. William F. Winter, Jr. (Historic American Buildings Survey photographer)
33. A.K. Mosley (Historic American Buildings Survey draftsman)
34. Kjeld Tidemand-Johannessen (Intern in Object Conservation, MMA, 1977-1984)
35. John Canonico (Associate Conservator, Objects Conservation, MMA)
36. Ernest McCann (Winterthur Paint Shop)
37. Chris Blair (Objects Conservation, MMA)
38. John Canonico (Associate Conservator, Objects Conservation, MMA)
39. Mr. R.C. Koeppen (USDA, Center for Wood Anatomy Research)
40. Frank G. Matero (Conservator with Micro Delta Ltd.)
41. Julie Nicoletta (noted in 1990 as working on dissertation concerning Shakers at Mount Lebanon, NY)
42. June Sprigg (Curator at Hancock Shaker Village)
43. Jane Nylander (Expert on period bedding)
44. Robert Emlen (Shaker Historian)
45. Edward Deming Andrews (Shaker Historian and Collector)
46. Faith Andrews (Shaker Historian and Collector)
47. Survey Drawings for Philadelphia Museum of Art (drawn by “/R” for Garvan, PMA, Mar 1973)
48. Historic American Buildings Survey
49. Historic American Buildings Survey photographs
50. Historic American Buildings Survey drawings
51. Faith Andrews and Edward Deming (Andrews, *Shaker Furniture*, DATE)
52. United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing (*Millennial Laws*, 1831/45)
53. Andrews (*A Shaker Meeting House and its Builder*, 1962)
54. Hervey Elkins (*Fifteen Years in the Senior Order of Shakers : A Narration of Facts Concerning That Singular People*, 1853)
55. Anna Dodgson (*Mother Lucy’s Word to Betsy Bates*, 1841)
56. Issachar Bates (1834)
57. Miss Leslie (*The House Book*, 1843)
58. Julia Neal (*The Shaker Image*, 1974)
59. J.G. Shea (*The American Shaker and Their Furniture*, 1979)
60. June Sprigg (*By Shaker Hands*, 1975)
61. Henri Desroche (*The American Shakers*, 1971)
62. Shaker Elder Frederick William Evans (*Shakers and Shakeresses, Mount Lebanon*, 1/73-12/73)
63. Charles Nordhoff (*The Communistic Societies of The United States*, 1873)
64. John Humphrey Noyes (*History of American Socialism*, 1870)
65. Charles Edward Robinson (*Concise History of the Shakers*, 1893)
66. Cyrus Hamlin (*My Life and Times*, 1893)
67. William Lassiter (*Shaker Architecture*, 1966).
68. Shaker period room at the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum
69. Shaker period room at the Philadelphia Museum of Art
70. Sabbath Day Lake dwelling (remade to paint color of dwelling c.1980 via Robert Emlen)

## APPENDIX B:

Finding Aid for American Wing Shaker Folders (AWSF), July 2015

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Folder A – “118 Shaker Room – Photographs and Drawings 1972.187.1-3”

Folder B – “Folk Art Installation Photos – Gallery 118”

Folder C – “118 Shaker Room Photographs”

Folder D – “118 Shaker Room – Research Materials 1972.187.1-3”

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## Abbreviations:

d. Date of Document

od. Date of Original Document

nd. Date Unknown

np. No Page Number

na. Author Unknown

oa. Author of Original Document

l. Location of Document

ol. Location of Original Document

HABS Historic American Buildings Survey

HSV Hancock Shaker Village

HSVA Hancock Shaker Village Archive

LoC Library of Congress

MMA Metropolitan Museum of Art

MtL Mount Lebanon, Columbia County, NY

NFD North Family Dwelling, MtL Shaker Community, NY

NFJ North Family Joiners, Barrington, MA

NY New York

SRR Shaker Room, gallery 118 (gallery 734 today) of the American Wing, MMA

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## Description:

The Shaker Folders at the American Wing consist of four hanging folders reliably brownish green and filled to capacity. Unlike an archive at a historical society or a University library's rare and manuscript collection, these files are liable to grow and shrink over the years. They are working documents of a sort, and they reflect their usefulness to the American Wing. These files can be found in the filing cabinets of the American Wing's Department of American Domestic Arts, not the MMA archives. Their apparently profane usefulness may well provide a more responsive example of a general condition of all archives. More than a straightforward collection, these files speak to what is collected, why, and to what ends these documents are gathered; as well as, how answers to these questions change over time. As a result, this finding aid may not accurately portray the state of these files if one visited today.

This finding aid transcribes the state of the AWSF in July of 2015 when I visited to learn about the American Wing's reproduction of Shaker architecture. Since my visit fifteen months



ago, the Shaker Room has been refurbished for an exhibit that opened 13 July 2016. I presume (but do not know) that during the preparations for this show – while the Shaker room was closed to the public – these files grew. In the museum’s use of these documents during the research and development leading up to the show, I also presume that papers were added, removed, replaced, photocopied, glossed, and passed from hand to hand. Thus, this finding aid may also show documents in a different order than that in which I left them after my two-day visit.

Upon entering the American Wing offices for the first time, I was led to a central, circular table that held the four, stacked Shaker Folders. Over the course of two days I noted in sequence each piece of paper. And along the way I read, analyzed, annotated, and photocopied pages of notes, intradepartmental memoranda, field sketches, pamphlets, photographs, academic essays, and public articles on the Shakers. Through this process I learned that some documents were missing. A memo, for instance, might only appear as pages 2-4 of 8 total, and that memo may reference another that does not exist at that moment within the AWSF. I have also come across references to these Shaker Folders in the writing of other scholars which cite items no longer contained within them. This in no way indicates a void or gap in the collection, but rather it informs an approach to the archive. The lack of one document or another does not indicate an absence; only a current state.

Regardless, the American Wing and the MMA assiduously document and I have little doubt that these items do appear elsewhere. In fact, it would have been possible to access numerous other archival sources to attempt to expand on the story told by the AWSF. However, I sought no further information beyond that which appeared in these files to help articulate the SRR in part to set the scope of this project by consciously limiting the available material and thus establishing a close relationship between the “archive” and the “architecture” at hand. This thesis thus tells stories of the “Shaker Retiring Room” while insisting on a direct connection with the space of production from which it appeared. If the American Wing has a *laboratory* purpose-built for the reproduction of the Shaker room, it was stacked in those four, brownish green hanging folders. Below is a map to that space.

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## **Folder A – “118 Shaker Room – Photographs and Drawings 1972.187.1-3”**

[Although noted here as gallery 118, the Shaker room is MMA gallery 734 today]

1. (9) documents, AWSF, multiple dates.
  - 1.1. Print out from HABS LoC web page. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/> (Accessed 17:26, 17 November 2010).
  - 1.2. Printouts of drawings, (oa. A.K. Mosley) na., “North Family of Shakers Lebanon, Mount Lebanon, NY,” HABS Survey #NY-3249, (ol. LoC) AWSF, (od. 1940) nd.. (11) drawings total in set.
    - 1.2.1. “Residence East Elevation,” (1 of 11)
    - 1.2.2. NOT PRESENT: “Residence North and South Elevations,” (2 of 11)
    - 1.2.3. NOT PRESENT: “Residence West Elevation,” (3 of 11)

- 1.2.4. "Main Residence: Plan of First Floor" (4 of 11)
- 1.2.5. "Main Residence: Family Meeting Room" (5 of 11)
- 1.2.6. "Main Residence: Plan of Basement Floor" (6 of 11)
- 1.2.7. "Main Residence: Plan of Second Floor" (7 of 11)
- 1.2.8. "Main Residence: Plan of Attic Floor" (8 of 11)
- 1.2.9. NOT PRESENT: "Details of Original Steam Radiators," (9 of 11)
- 1.2.10. NOT PRESENT: "Sketch of Original Cooling System in Basement Larder – North Family," (10 of 11)
- 1.2.11. "Main Residence: Cross Section and Typical Details" (11 of 11)
- 1.3. Print out of photograph, N. E. Baldwin (photographer), "MEETING ROOM," HABS #NY-3249, N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-14, ol. LoC, black and white interior view of NFD, (od. November 1939) nd.. See A:4.8, same photograph.
2. Photocopied booklet staple bound, na., Darrow School auction booklet, AWSF, nd.. Originally published by the Darrow School, December 1972. Includes (3) modified HABS floor plans compiled on a single page; rooms in HABS plans are labeled individually with letters and numbers corresponding with lot numbers for auction. Pamphlet dates NFD as 1818-1873 [ending date is incorrect].
3. (11) print outs of photographs, multiple authors, HABS Survey #NY 3249, N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-1-6 (1-6 of 21 photographs), (ol. LoC) AWSF, black and white exterior views of NFD, (od. 1920s-1939) nd.. Mounted on board or loose, photo-paper, titles on back of photographs. multiple copies.
  - 3.1. N.E. Baldwin, "East (Front) and North Sides," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-1, (od. June 1938) nd.. 3 copies.
  - 3.2. William F. Winter, Jr., "East (Front), North Sides," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-2, (od. 1920s) nd..
  - 3.3. William F. Winter, Jr., "East (Front) Side," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-3, (od. Summer 1931) nd.. See C:1.
  - 3.4. NOT PRESENT: "West (Rear) and North Sides," William F. Winter, Jr., N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-4, (od. Summer 1930) nd..
  - 3.5. N.E. Baldwin, "West (Rear) Side," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-5, (od. December 1939) nd.. 2 copies.
  - 3.6. N.E. Baldwin, "Detail of Basement Masonry," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-6, (od. November 1939) nd.. 2 copies, narrow depth of field.
4. (22) print outs of photographs, N. E. Baldwin (photographer), HABS #NY-3249, N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-7-15 (7-15 of 21 photographs), (ol. of original photographs: LoC, November) AWSF, black and white interior views of NFD, (od. of original photographs: 1939) nd.. Photo-paper mounted on board or loose, titles on back of photographs.
  - 4.1. "Family Dining Room," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-7. 2 copies.
  - 4.2. "Guest Dining Room," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-8. 2 copies.
  - 4.3. "Cupboards in Guest's Dining room," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-9. 2 copies.

- 4.4. "Cooling Room," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-10. 4 copies.
  - 4.5. "Canning Kitchen," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-11. 2 copies.
  - 4.6. "Canning Kitchen Sink," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-12. 2 copies.
  - 4.7. "Canning Kitchen Elevator," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-13, December 1939. 2 copies.
  - 4.8. "Meeting Room," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-14. 3 copies, see A:1.3, same photograph. Shows framed photograph of Elder Frederick William Evans hanging on wall.
  - 4.9. "Collection of Shaker Furniture," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-15. 3 copies, each appears slightly darker, perhaps different exposure times?
5. (4) photographs in envelope [MMA stationary], Karen Willis [MMA staff photographer], "Shaker: photos by Karen Willis, MMA for period room book, 1996," NY, AWSF, black and white views of Shaker room, 1996.
    - 5.1. View of SRR from west, MM83573-1044-5. Similar angle to A:1.8.
    - 5.2. Partial view 1 of SRR north wall, MM83574-1044-5
    - 5.3. Partial view of SRR south wall, MM83575-1044-5
    - 5.4. Partial view 2 of SRR north wall, MM83576-1044-5
  6. (3) color photographs, na., showing dilapidated interior views of NFD, [probably] c.1972 during disassembly of NFD, MtL, NY, nd.. Unmounted and unprotected in file, natural lighting, no furniture; orange tint to photo-paper typical of aged Kodachrome photograph.
    - 6.1. Color photograph 1: view of "Sister Murella Gallup" [title given on HABS plans of NFD] room toward north wall [same view as photograph A:8], clothes hangers visible on floor, white plaster yellowed, wood paneling partially stripped.
    - 6.2. Color photograph 2: view on first floor looking east toward door into meeting room, shows flight of stairs presumably dismantled for display and now in American Wing storage.
    - 6.3. Color photograph 3: view from top of stairs [seen from bottom in A:6.2] looking west toward door into "Sister Murella Gallup" / Lot "B2" / the retiring room to be dismantled for the American Wing's "Shaker Retiring Room." Note the condition of the wall and woodwork. Just out of view the right of the picture frame is the door into the retiring room dismantled for the PMA shaker period room.
  7. (10) print outs of photographs, na. [oa. N.E. Baldwin], [HABS photographs: "Exterior Door Latch," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-16; "Front Door Latch and Bolt," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-17; "Dining Room Latch," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-18; "Interior Door Latch," N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-19.], AWSF, black and white views of latch details, nd..
  8. Photograph, Richard Cheek, "Accession No. 1972.187.1-3, Shaker Retiring Room, New Lebanon, NY, about 1830-40," AWSF, mounted black and white interior photograph, 1981. Documentary photograph of installed Shaker room at the American Wing, MMA, NY,
  9. (7) contact prints of photographic negatives, na., "Shaker room interiors, MtL, NY," AWSF, nd.. Including images of NFD and the South Family Workshop.

10. (2) photocopies of drawings, na., survey drawings of cabinetry, AWSF, [probably c.1972] nd..
  - 10.1. Photocopy of drawing 1: itemizes architectural elements and their organization: number of drawers and doors, notes drawers and doors that are missing in existing original cupboards, notes details (for instance, woodwork set flush with plaster top surface), dimensions, drawings not to scale, hardline drawing in pen.
  - 10.2. Photocopy of drawing 2: sketch floor plan of "Sister's Retiring Room" showing location in overall building, not to scale, includes dimensions, windows and doors marked and labeled; shows closet as adjacent room; includes note: "hinges on door labeled AK and son."
11. (4) documents, Morrison H. Heckscher, AWSF, multiple dates. Survey notes on lined paper bound with paper-clip.
  - 11.1. Page 1: list, Morrison H. Heckscher, "Items from Shaker Bldg., New Lebanon: delivered to 158<sup>th</sup> st. – 11/3/72," white lined paper torn from spiral notebook, pencil and blue pen, nd.. The document has been inscribed at more than one time, presumably using a pencil during the field survey [probably at auction in 1972], and the blue pen to label the sheet before filing it into AWSF [probably 3 November 1972]. The date may refer to the moment these items were delivered, and thus perhaps not the date of initial inscription, nor the date of the second inscription.
  - 11.2. Pages 2-4: [probably Morrison H. Heckscher], survey sketches, [probably 1972] nd..
12. Photocopy of drawing, na., "PROPOSED REVISION TO SHAKER/FOLDART GALLERIES–THE AMERICAN WING, 1/20/76, 1/8"=1'-0," AWSF, (d. of original drawing: 20 January 1976), nd.. Plan showing room in context of other proximate American Wing rooms, drafted in pencil.
13. Negatives of photographs and contact prints, multiple authors, AWSF, multiple dates.
  - 13.1. (4) Black and white interior photographs of shaker room within envelope [MMA stationary], Karen Willis [MMA staff photographer], "Shaker: photos by Karen Willis, MMA for period room book, 1996," NY, AWSF, 1996. (see A:5)
  - 13.2. (7) contact prints of photographic negatives, na., "Shaker room interiors, MtL, NY," AWSF, nd.. Including images of NFD and the South Family Workshop. (see A:1.9)
14. Large format negative, AWSF, nd.. (see A:3.1)
15. Drawings in manila folder, multiple authors, AWSF, nd..
  - 15.1. (2) print outs of drawings, (oa. Arthur Boyd Houghton) na., showing popular representations of Shakers in performing daily tasks in their spaces. Published in *The Graphic*, London (May 7, 1870): 536; *The Graphic*, London (May 14, 1870): np.

- 15.2. (3) pieces yellow trace and pencil, na., sketches show thinking about the arrangement and shape of the Shaker room (gallery 734) in relationship to the nearby circular exhibition space (gallery 735), the Shaker stair (never installed), restrooms and kitchen service spaces (closed to public). Compare with document A:12 above.
16. (4) drawings paper-clipped together, multiple authors, "Shaker Room: Notes, Architectural Drawings – c.1970s," AWSF, nd..
  - 16.1. Drawing: photocopy of typewritten page, na., "Collection of Shaker objects offered by Mrs. Edward Deming Andrews: Furniture for display: Shaker," 1 page. 3 sections in document with items numbered by hand in left margin, each references a "plate" in the book *Shaker Furniture* by Edward Deming and Faith Andrews. Typewritten to right appears a dollar amount presumably indicating the value of each item. The bottom of the page indicates a total dollar amount of \$29,950.
  - 16.2. (3) drawings: photocopies of survey drawings, na., HABS #NY 3249, NFD, MtL, NY (11 in set).
17. Photocopies of drawings, na., HABS #NY 3249, NFD, MtL, NY (8 of 11 in set), AWSF, nd..
  - 17.1. "Residence East Elevation," (1 of 11).
  - 17.2. "Residence North and South Elevations," (2 of 11).
  - 17.3. "Residence West Elevation," (3 of 11).
  - 17.4. "Main Residence: Plan of First Floor," (4 of 11).
  - 17.5. NOT PRESENT: "Main Residence: Family Meeting Room," (5 of 11).
  - 17.6. "Main Residence: Plan of Basement Floor," (6 of 11).
  - 17.7. "Main Residence: Plan of Second Floor," (7 of 11).
  - 17.8. "Main Residence: Plan of Attic Floor," (8 of 11).
  - 17.9. NOT PRESENT: "Details of Original Steam Radiators," (9 of 11).
  - 17.10. NOT PRESENT: "Sketch of Original Cooling System in Basement Larder – North Family," (10 of 11).
  - 17.11. "Main Residence: Cross Section and Typical Details," (11 of 11).
18. Drawing, D.M.C. Hopping, "Plan + Elevations, Shaker Room, American Wing, Metropolitan Museum of Art," D.M.C. Hopping (200 E.42<sup>nd</sup> St. NYC), 4 elevations and plan of Shaker room, scale 3/8 inches = 1 foot, c.18 inches x 24 inches, AWSF, d.24 October 1977. Appears to be contact copy of hand drawing on yellowed paper (nd.), left margin shows drawing torn from larger set (pages unknown). Dimensions given of plan, as well as one dimension provided in elevation showing the height of the peg rail, no North arrow. The drawing shows no structural work and no detailing or measuring of existing wall thickness, or depth of faux period room window pockets behind "Shaker" window installation. No information provided beyond the interior envelope of period room surface. Information given along with dimensions shows transom windows, base boards, door and window elevations, and pegboard all in relation with one another. No furniture or moveable items present.

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**Folder B – “Folk Art Installation Photos – Gallery 118”**

1. (11) photographs, na., interior views of American Wing Folk Art galleries, (2 identified as MM70082-85/4888 and MM70212-12/4857) AWSF, nd..
2. Slide in MMA stationary envelope, na., “Slide of Folk Art Gallery, ca. 1980s?,” AWSF, nd..

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**Folder C – “118 Shaker Room Photographs”**

1. Print out of photograph, William F. Winter, Jr., “East (Front) Side,” HABS Survey #NY 3249, N.Y. 11-NELEB V., 24-3, black and white photograph (od.Summer 1931) nd.. (See A:3.3)
2. 7 color transparencies, na., “Shaker Room Photos by Richard Cheek,” AWSF, nd.. Transparencies of Richard Cheek photographs of American Wing installation.
3. (8) photographs, Richard Cheek, MM70086/488, black and white views of installed Shaker Room, d.1972.
  - 3.1. View 1 (6 photographs).
  - 3.2. View 2 (2 photographs).
4. (5) documents, na., “Dan – Shaker Photos,” multiple dates.
  - 4.1. Unknown author, 3 color photographs of Retiring Room (called Lot B2 during auction) in NFD, MtL prior to its disassembly, found in yellow Kodak developing envelope.
  - 4.2. (2) detail drawings, D.M.C. Hopping, Sabbathday Lake, Maine meeting hall, 8 1/2 inch x 11 inch yellow lined legal paper and pencil, AWSF, d.2 September 1980.
5. Manila envelope, “Richard Cheek Photos,” AWSF, 8 1/2 x 11 inches, folder empty, nd..
6. (3) photographs, Richard Cheek, AWSF, black and white views of Shaker Room, 3 copies, nd.. (see C:3.1).

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**Folder D – “118 Shaker Room – Research Materials 1972.187.1-3”**

1. Note to file, na., “Note to Files in Shaker Room,” AWSF, note on lined yellow legal paper, d.5 September 1990. Note reads: “Julie Nicoletta, Ph.D. candidate Yale University, is researching “Shaker Dwelling Houses at Mount Lebanon, N.Y.”.”
2. Business card, na., AWSF, printed on cardstock, nd.. Business name: Ornamental Plastering Co., Repair of Architectural Period Rooms and ornamental castings; owner: Stephen Zychal; contact: 609-654-8927, P.O. Box 204, Medford, NJ, 08055.
3. Note to file, na., AWSF, handwritten on tan lined paper nd.. Reads: “See window shades @ PMA” & “Chatham: A. Donald Emerick (work #) 518-457-5826, Old Chatham, NY.”
4. Photocopy of report, (oa. Frank G. Matero) na., “Architectural Finishes Examination Report / Conservation Proposal of The New Lebanon Shaker Retiring Room (ca. 1835) prepared for The American Wing, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York, ATTN: Craig E. Miller, Asst. Curator,” 3 pages + title page, (od.28 July 1980) nd.. Appears to be an incomplete copy of a longer report (first page begins mid-sentence without indentation indicating the preceding page is missing).
5. Letter from June Sprigg to Craig Miller, includes attached document, AWSF, including multi-page report, d.8 January 1981.
  - 5.1. Letter: regarding the attached list of objects and sources, and also short discussion of travel and institutional costs between “Shaker Community, Inc.” (Pittsfield, MA) and “Metropolitan Museum of Art” (NYC) concerning insurance costs and burden it places on small not-for-profits like Hancock Shaker Village.
  - 5.2. Report: a narrative table providing Item, Number, Source, and Description for each entry. Document begins with narrative image of how the American Wing ought to conceive of the Shaker room. Sprigg recommends placement, number, relationships between furniture and objects in the room. She justifies these recommendations through reference to examples and published books, predominantly books from the mid-nineteenth century, and one book by Edward Deming and Faith Andrews. Sprigg further notes where reproductions will be necessary including suggestions on where or who to go to for the necessary information: the window shade; rag carpet; towel; pillow case; pillow; sheet; coverlet; etc.
6. Photocopy of text, na., AWSF, copy of excerpt from the Shaker’s *Millennial Laws* as published by Edward Deming Andrews as Appendix to *The People Called Shakers* (Dover, 1963), pp.271-72 (section copied concerns caretakers of dwelling rooms and furniture in dwelling rooms; also includes p.127), nd..
7. (3) notes to file, na., AWSF, notes on tan lined paper, nd..

- 7.1. Reads: Millennial Laws quote transcribed stating that there be no images, maps, paintings, etc. hung in retiring rooms.
- 7.2. Reads: MtL established 1787-1947.
- 7.3. Reads: "Chairs hung upside down (*The Shaker Image*, p.23)."
8. Photocopy of book, na., AWSF, from: Neal, *The Shaker Image*, p.43., nd..
9. Photocopy of book, na., AWSF, from: Andrews and Andrews, *Shaker Furniture*, pp.55-60, 56 missing, nd..
10. Letter from Nancy E. Richards [Curator, Winterthur Museum] to Morrison H. Heckscher [Curator, American Wing], AWSF, d. 9 September 1980. Includes (4) samples of paints and stains used for the installation of Winterthur Shaker room; amples provided by Ernest McCann, Winterthur Paint Shop.
11. Intradepartmental Memorandum from "Nonnie Frelinghuysen" (American Domestic Arts) to Kjeld Tidemand-Johannessen, Chris Blair (Objects Conservation), AWSF, 3 stapled pages, typewritten on MMA letterhead, d.9 October 1981. Reads as a list of "objects requiring special mounts, brackets or fastenings" for Shaker material in Room or Folk Art Gallery, listed objects for special mounting include accession numbers.
12. Advertising broadsheet, "Notice: The North Family Joiners," AWSF, announcing establishment of reproduction furniture business on June 1971 in Great Barrington, MA, (date of printing unknown) nd.. Two partners of NFJ, Mr. Caffall (with bird of peace embroidered on his shirt pocket) and Mr. Markett, pictured on cover.
13. Note to file, Morrison [H. Heckscher], AWSF, loose white lined paper, blue pen, nd.. Note comments on "Shaker Blue" and "Shaker Red" and "depth of Shaker platform," makes reference to Robert [F.W.] Meader [Director of the Shaker Museum Foundation in Old Chatham, New York].
14. Note to file, na., "Shaker Bibliography," AWSF, handwritten list of books "(For MMA Library)," yellow legal paper, 2 pages, nd.. List includes the following books:  
 [Henri] Desroche, *The American Shakers* (1971)  
 F[rederick] W[illiam] Evans, *Shakers and Shakeresses, Mount Lebanon* (1/[18]73-12/[18]73)  
 C[harles] Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of The United States* (1873)  
 J[ohn] H[umphrey] Noyes, *History of American Socialism* (1870)  
 C[harles] E[dward] Robinson, *Concise History of the Shakers* (1893)  
 Cy[rus] Ha[m]lin, *My Life and Times* (1893)  
 [William] Lassiter, *Shaker Architecture* (1966).
15. Business card taped to blank white paper, na., AWSF, "Shaker Woodwork" handwritten in pencil on card, nd.. Name: James Baker; company: James Baker and Peter Blake, Architects; address: Studio 810, Carnegie Hall, NYC, 10019; # (212) JU6-6440.



16. Photocopies, na., AWSF, copies of documentary photographs and (roughly scaled) drawings of NFD made for PMA on site, 13 pages, (od. March 1973) nd.. References Tom Robinson (PMA); Charles Caffall (NFJ); "FF" [?]; "A2 elements" [?]. Drawings show construction details (presumably made during demolition of building), elevations of walls, windows, doors, and cabinets separately with basic measurements.
17. Photocopy of article, na., AWSF, copy of Janet Malcolm, "On and Off the Avenue," *The New Yorker*, (3 march 1973): 82+ (incomplete copy of article), nd..
18. Catalog, NFJ, "The North Family Joiners: 1972 catalog," AWSF, 1972. Reads: "...builders of fine Shaker reproductions and other furniture in a simple country tradition." Other quotes from Shaker Elder profess a certain absorption of Modernist paradigms into the rhetoric of tradition and American nationalism.
19. (10) photocopies, (oa. two authors, on same hand as D.16 above) na., AWSF, copies of site survey drawings, freehand on lined paper, pen and marker, 10 pages, nd..
  - 19.1. Unknown Author 1, "FF Window (service window)" [?], detailed measurements of woodwork placements measured off top of floorboards to various woodwork bands around room.
  - 19.2. Unknown Author 1, Door elevation.
  - 19.3. Unknown Author 1, Detail of "FF Window" in elevation and section.
  - 19.4. Unknown Author 1, Door elevation.
  - 19.5. Unknown Author 1, [?]
  - 19.6. Unknown Author 1, Plan.
  - 19.7. Unknown Author 1, [?]
  - 19.8. Unknown Author 1, [?]
  - 19.9. Unknown Author 2 [different hand], window elevation, use of ruler, 1/8 inch tolerance.
  - 19.10. Unknown Author 2 [different hand], window elevation, use of ruler, 1/8 inch tolerance.
20. Photocopies, (oa. same author, time, place as photographs in D.16 above) na., AWSF, copies of documentary polaroids (multiple per page), 4 pages, nd.
21. Note to file, na., "Note to Files – Shake Room Notebook," AWSF, d.19 August 1980. Note regarding a possible paint color match for period room, reference to Robert Emlen, who suggested this particular yellow as a "good match."
22. Intradepartmental Memorandum from Morrison H. Heckscher to Lewis Sharp (Curator and Administrator at MMA, Director of Denver Art Museum since 1989), AWSF, d.16 July 1981. Regarding the problem of leveling the existing structural concrete floor in order to get construction work on SRR moving again, refers to hiring of Paul Chaitin to put down concrete skim coat for no more than \$3,000.00.

23. Photocopy of article, na., AWSF, copy of Robert P. Emlen, "The Great Stone Dwelling of the Enfield, New Hampshire Shakers," *Old-Time New England* LXIX, No.3-4, (Winter-Spring Issue, Jan.-June 1979): 69-85, Images in photocopy contain slight annotations, nd..
24. Document, from George Sexton Associates to Craig Miller (MMA), "Transmittal," AWSF, blue pen note: "Sent by Alejandra Smith," nd. Contains "Framing Diagram plan of the Shaker Room – American Wing." George Sexton Associates (Architectural Services, Museum Lighting, Exhibition Design), 1629 Eckington Place, NE, Washington, D.C., 20002, #202-269-0594, nd..
25. Letter from John Canonico (Associate Conservator, Objects Conservations, MMA) to R.C. Koeppen (Center for Wood Anatomy Research, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Madison, WI, 53705), sent: 10 February 1981, received: 17 February 1981 (stamped), wood sample identity ascertained: 3 March 1981 (stamped and signed).
26. Note to File. Reads: "October 1970 *Antique*: full issue devoted to Shakers"
27. Report, Frank G. Matero (delivered to Craig Miller), "Architectural Finishes Examination Report / Conservation Proposal of The New Lebanon Shaker Retiring Room (ca. 1835) prepared for The American Wing, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York, ATTN: Craig E. Miller, Asst. Curator," AWSF, bound, 28 July 1980. Full original typewritten report in binder (Project #: MDL 80.10, "Sister Murella Gallup Retiring Room"): an examination and analysis of architectural fabric removed from the original site in 1972. Yellow legal paper note tucked inside. (See D:4) Sections of Report: Objective; General Background and History; Shaker Woodwork and Finishes; Examination Report; Finishes; Conservation Proposal; Sources (Andrews, *Shaker Furniture*, 1937; J.G. Shea, *The American Shaker and Their Furniture*, 1979; J. Sprigg, *By Shaker Hands*, 1975).
28. Blank form, na., AWSF, early typewritten form mostly blank, nd..
29. Photocopy of documents, na., AWSF, copy of rolodex card gathered with (3) yellow legal papers, includes MMA accession #: "Woodwork-Architecture," nd..
30. Document, na., "Shaker Room (and Staircase)," AWSF, nd..
31. Survey notes, na., AWSF, notes for MMA Shaker room including messy elevations and a plan, nd..
32. Letter from John F. Joline III (Headmaster of Darrow School) to "All Trustees" (of Darrow School), on Darrow School Letterhead, AWSF, d.1972. Addresses fundraising from 1971-72 and for 1972-73 fiscal years. Direct discussion of money, enrollment, and projections as related to funds and [NY State] historic preservation grants for conserving Shaker buildings. Why does the American Wing hold a letter addressed to Darrow trustees? Was an MMA curator a Trustee? Back of letter contains a rough survey drawing

showing the American Wing's proposed Shaker room situated within the plan of the American Wing c.1972 including the built-in cabinet from the NFD.

33. Photocopy of flier, na., "Auction Sale," AWSF, copy of Darrow School auction flier with survey notes and drawings on verso side. Reads: "Things Available," [drawn on the day of the auction?] nd..
34. Not to file, na., AWSF, reads: "A.D. Emerich, P.O. Box 5214, Albany, NY, 12205"; "Shaker Expert"; "Review Installation with Don," nd..
35. Note to file, na., "Notes on seeing Shaker Room installed at Philadelphia Museum, April 1977," AWSF, typewritten note to file, nd.. References Robert P. Emlen regarding floors, the quality of window treatments, and the overall size of the room.
36. Note to file, na., "Notes on Period Rooms, Sept. 9, 1975," AWSF, d.9 September 1975. Reference to outlets, to lighting, and to Shaker stairs purchased at Darrow auction.
37. Intradepartmental Memorandum from Morrison H. Heckscher to Kevin Roche, AWSF, d.22 January 1976. Addresses revision of placement of Shaker room in American Wing plan concerning relationship to kitchen, lecture and reception area, proximity to other period rooms, the Shaker staircase and acknowledgement of the late hour for such plan shifts. References "attached plan" that is no longer attached.
38. Intradepartmental Memorandum from Messrs. Howat and Tracy to Mr. Rosenblatt, "Re: Comments on Current Plans for New American Wing Building," AWSF, handwritten note at top, 2 pages, d.30 March 1973. Copy of memo here only contains 2 pages pertaining directly to Shaker room. Discusses Shaker staircase and some space planning contingencies that may result in excluding it.
39. Note to file, [MHH?] na., "Paint Colors," nd.. Notes the paint colors used in PMA Shaker room, provides some citations, and refers to the Chatham Shaker community.
40. Intradepartmental Memorandum from Morrison H. Heckscher to Berry B. Tracy, AWSF, d.30 September 1974. Discussing New Building design, refers to these decisions as "the concrete corset by which the movements of ourselves and our successors will be dictated."
41. Photocopies of drawings, na., AWSF, shows new building plan arrangement options, 6 pages, nd.. Numerous plan versions and a section showing Shaker staircase.
42. Printout of drawings, na., HABS #NY-3249, 7 pages (11 in set), AWSF, nd.. (see A.1.2, A.16, A.17)
43. Essay, Kjeld Tidemand-Johannessen (Object Conservation Department intern), "Every Force Evolves a Form: The Installation of the Shaker Retiring Room at the Metropolitan Museum of Art," unpublished manuscript, AWSF, d.20 December 1981. Includes the

following citation on title page that may indicate this essay was written for a course at Columbia University where Tidemand-Johannessen was a student: "American Decorative Arts A6732, Columbia University, New York, NY, Dec. 20, 1981."

44. Photocopy of article, na., AWSF, copy of Rita Reif, "Antiques: Furnishings of the Shakers," *The New York Times*, no section, nd., nd..
  45. Photocopy of article, na., AWSF, copy of Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, "Metropolitan Opens Shaker Room," *The Shaker Messenger*, nd., p.9 (incomplete copy), nd..
  46. Photocopy of article, na., AWSF, copy of Marius B. Péladeau, "The Shakers of Maine," *Antiques* (June 1975): 1144-1153, nd.. Includes references to numerous other articles on Shakers in *Antiques*.
  47. Drawing on trace paper, na., AWSF, possibility for Shaker room layout, nd..
  48. Photocopies of drawings and notes, na., AWSF, includes copies of trace drawings itemized above, HABS #NY-3249 drawing set, and survey sketches, nd.. Notable non-duplicate drawing of Shaker staircase sketch showing details and dimensions of landing and handrails.
  49. Unpublished manuscript, Acoustiguide Script: Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Shaker Furniture," production #: [blank], d. October 24, 1985, narrator: Amelia Peck, 18 pages, multiple dates. Note at bottom of page 1 in pencil reads: "\*This Acoustiguide was never made, Probably for opening of Study Center. A[melia] P[eck] – 1998". Also includes marginalia (edits to script) throughout by Amelia Peck, nd. Note on Department of American Decorative Arts paper framing the Shakers as a utopian community in response to Industrialization attached to page 1, 2 pages, no author, nd. Acoustiguide scripts are presumably internal documents written and revised before being recorded by curators and disseminated via (in this case) tape cassette.
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*Millennial Laws or Gospel Statues and Ordinances adapted to the Day of Christ's Second Appearing. Given and established in the Church for the protection thereof by Father Joseph Meacham and Mother Lucy Wright the presiding Ministry and by their Successors the Ministry and Elders. Recorded at New Lebanon Aug 'st 7<sup>th</sup> 1821. Revised and re-established by the Ministry and Elders Oct 1845. Reprinted as Appendix in Andrews, The People Called Shakers (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963), pp. 249-289.*

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